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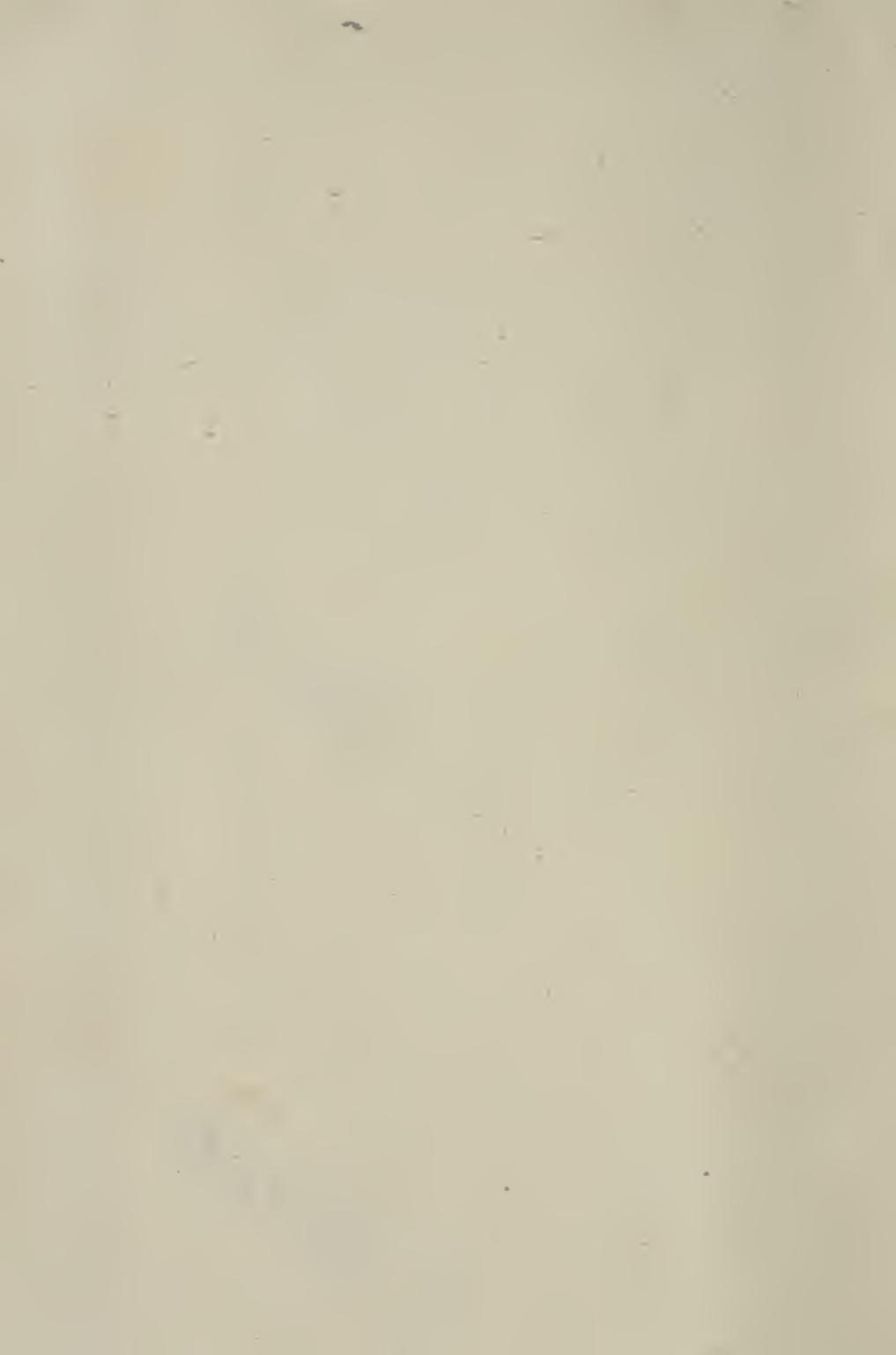
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D U D L E Y.

BY

MISS O'KEEFFE,

AUTHOR OF

PATRIARCHAL TIMES, OR THE LAND OF CANAAN ;
ZENO比亚, QUEEN OF PALMYRA ; &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed by Strahan and Spottiswoode, Printers-Street ;
FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1819.

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DUDDLEY.

LETTER I.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to the Countess of Alford.

MY DEAR MADAM, Oakland Park, Dorsetshire.

THE only apology I can make for my very sudden departure from Paris, is to request your ladyship to read the enclosed letter, which I received whilst preparing to attend your party on Wednesday evening last:—it will fully explain my motive for not even stopping to take leave of you, and our numerous Anglo-Parisian friends, to whom I have now to request you will account for my disappearance, though in all probability the newspapers have by this time informed the whole fashionable world of

the melancholy event which occasioned my abrupt return to England.

Had my own private concerns alone been the cause of my journey, I should have found time to have sent you a few lines of farewell, but, as you are deeply interested in the business, I purposely avoided you, in the delusive hope of being able to transmit from hence less unpleasant news. Your ladyship may now readily guess that the intelligence I received related to your brother. — Lay by my letter, and read the enclosed.

“ REV. SIR,

Oakland Park, Dorsetshire.

“ It is with great pain and grief of mind, that I think it my duty to inform you, before you can even read it in the newspapers, of the death of my Lady: — she died, as it appears, suddenly, on Friday evening, between the hours of five and seven, since which time my master has been little better than a madman.

“ I think, Sir, that if you, who from having been his school-fellow, and known him from a boy, understand his temper,

and have more influence over him than all the rest of his friends and even relations put together, could come here without delay, much mischief might be prevented.—Not one of his neighbours are at present admitted to see him:—he is entirely alone, and spends most of his time in the room wherein are deposited the remains of my departed Lady. None of his household presuming to intrude into his presence, he has really no one to speak to, and is starving, fretting, and consuming himself to death.

“ I need not remind you, Reverend Sir, how sincerely my master values your friendship; yet as some motive ought perhaps to be given for my writing to you in preference to either of his sisters, I hope you will not be displeased at my mentioning what passed at our table, the very day before my Lady died: speaking of you, Sir, to some gentleman; a stranger, a Mr. Miles Cavendish of the navy, who was dining with him, I heard him, as I was placing the wine on the table, say in answer, I fancy to

some question — ‘ Who ? Clonmore of Exeter College ? — a better fellow does not exist on earth : — I have known him boy, youth, and man, and never met his equal.’ — ‘ He is now in Paris, I hear ; have you heard from him lately ? ’ enquired Mr. Cavendish. ‘ Yes ; he and Grantley, my brother-in-law at Copenhagen, are my only foreign correspondents ; my sister Jane dislikes writing, and my sister Caroline, also in France, likes pleasure, so from neither of those fair ladies do I ever receive a line.’

“ These were his very words, spoken with all that warmth of colour in his cheeks, and cheerfulness of voice, which I need not describe to you, Sir. Could you but see him now ! — In the hope that you will visit him soon, and that, through God’s blessing, you may be able to afford him some consolation in this, his bitter affliction, I hasten to conclude, remaining with all due respect,

“ Rev. and hon. Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ GEORGE HERBERT,

“ Steward to Sir Eliot Howard.”

On the receipt of this letter, (a passage of which here and there you, Lady Alford, must excuse, in consideration of the honest meaning of the good old man,) I quitted Paris without the least possible delay. On my arrival in London, stopping only a few minutes to acquaint Louisa with the motive of my unexpected return, I broke from every impediment in the shape of my wondering, delighted, and inquisitive children, and with a heavy heart set off post for Dorsetshire.

With far different sensations I had, on a summons from my friend, travelled that same road about two years before!

You, dear Lady Alford, the favourite companion of his youth, his best beloved sister, who well know with what fire and enthusiasm his whole person is lighted up, when his heart is filled with emotion, can picture him at that time meeting me on the road, about half a mile from Oakland Park, throwing himself from his horse, darting into my

chaise, and with a face radiant with joy seizing both my hands, exclaiming,

“ Clonmore, six years ago you married me to Claudina, you must now come and christen my first child, a late blessing it is true, but it is come at last.”—

This was the first intimation I had had of his new family-acquisition, being just returned from Scotland, and I now congratulated him on it most sincerely.

“ And I can tell you, Clonmore,” he added, “ it is a very pretty girl, and very like me.” He then took my arm, and at the risk of breaking my neck, for the day being cold, I was benumbed and chilled with my journey, he dragged me out of the chaise across the hall, and up stairs, nor would he suffer me to take a moment’s breath until he had fairly shoved me into his nursery.

There, in the full meridian of youth and beauty, in the perfect enjoyment of every earthly bliss, loving and beloved, I again met, after a three years’ separation, my dear and respected patroness Lady Howard. To her other virtues

was now added the maternal, and never shall I forget that look almost divine which she threw upon me, as I took her infant from her arms, and kissed and blessed it; neither can I forget her smile and tone of voice when threatening to turn her husband out of the room, did he not moderate his noisy transports.

You, Lady Alford, were not, I think, very intimately acquainted with your sister-in-law. — Your long residence in Ireland with your late lord prevented your meeting with her latterly; and even when in England, I understand you were not thrown much into the society of each other: — this is unfortunate, as you cannot, under these circumstances, do justice to the memory of the deceased, or form an idea of the extent of your brother's loss. Knowing her as I did from early youth, her father having been the pupil of mine, you, my dear madam, may judge under what impressions I now hastened towards the same dwelling.

There was no friend now to meet me on the road, no mistress of the house now to salute at entering, no cheerful, happy home, wherein, by spending time, long or short, to be convinced that married felicity is the purest, most natural, most exquisite on earth.

I reached Oakland Park about nine o'clock in the evening, and alighting at the door of the shrubbery nearest the house, ordered the post boys to the stables, and went round myself to a private door leading to the garden. — Taking the privilege of our brotherly friendship, I determined, without being announced, to make my own way to his dressing-room, where at various periods of our lives we had spent together many a happy hour.

On reaching the door I tapped gently, knocked loud, and still louder, but no answer being returned, I went in: the chamber was in such a complete state of confusion that it evidently had not been occupied for some time; — from thence I passed into the bed-rooms, and finding

the same solitude every where, I returned down the great staircase, and went boldly, with heavy sounding strides, towards the library.

Before I entered I stopped a moment to recover myself, when, with an emotion that almost deprived me of breath, I heard a low deep sigh from some one within ; I instantly threw open the door, and rushed forward, expecting to find my friend, but saw only Herbert.

The tears started into the eyes of the worthy old fellow as he raised his looks to mine, and got up to meet me, having first taken off his spectacles, and laid them on the large open book of accounts over which he seemed poring at my entrance. I soon perceived they were not tears of pleasure at the idea of having better news to impart ; on the contrary, his dejection was so great, and movements so slow, in quitting the writing-table, and placing a chair for me, that I instantly conjectured I had come too late, and that all was over.

“ I see how it is,” said I : “ you need not speak, Herbert, I see what has happened, your master is dead.”

“ Dead, Sir! Heaven forbid! my master is not dead, at least no one here has heard of his death ; but we do not know what is become of him.”

This sudden relief from the overwhelming certainty of Sir Eliot’s being no more, was too much for me, it occasioned at the instant a fit approaching nearer to strangulation than ever in my life I before experienced.

Herbert prevailed on me to sit down, and take some refreshment which he fetched ; and by this time the news of my arrival having spread from the stables to the house, many of the servants crowded to the hall under the mistaken idea that I knew where their master then was, and had come purposely to inform them, and arrange his domestic affairs during his absence. They were soon undeceived ; when each offered a conjecture, equally improbable, as to where and how Sir Eliot had secreted himself.

From their accounts it appears that soon after the funeral, (which had been retarded some days on your brother's madly refusing to part with the body of his wife,) he had confined himself upwards of four-and-twenty hours to his dressing-room, and having closed the shutters there remained without air, light, or food, or suffering any of the servants to enter. On the second morning he breakfasted in the library, saw his child, spoke to the nurse, and the rest of his people occasionally, and seemed to have recovered some share of resignation and composure. On the third day they all agree he was particularly calm, and at times cheerful. On the fourth he walked in the garden, and with a favourite Newfoundland dog strolled for about an hour into the park. On his return he dined below stairs for the first time, and in the evening sat in the library and read for some hours ; that night passed quietly, and the next morning he had disappeared !

Yes, literally disappeared — leaving no trace where or how to find him : —

while Herbert and the rest of the household (under the idea that he had retired as before to his bed-room, into which no one dared intrude) were perfectly secure as to his safety, he had fled, and whither, as they said, “Heaven knew.”

How often do we use this sort of sullen hopeless mode of expression, as if implying “Heaven knows no more than we,” and yet is it not the actual truth? — Is not our only comfort in this instance derived from the conviction that Heaven *does* know where now wanders our poor afflicted friend? — It is; and let us rest assured that the eye of Providence is as full upon the forlorn fugitive in his present hour of sorrow, as when the happy owner sheltered and embosomed in these his own domains.

Every endeavour to find him, dead or living, has hitherto proved useless: the country round has been searched, ponds and rivers dragged, the coast and tides watched, and every friend and acquaintance privately written to. We must now

have recourse to public measures, by distributing handbills through the country, and inserting advertisements in all the London and provincial papers.

I have already written three urgent letters on the business to Dr. H—, but have had no answer. How I regret *his* absence from Oakland Park at the period of Lady Howard's decease! It seems he was here only three days before her death, and intended to prolong his visit, when summoned to town to attend a nephew who was declared in a hopeless way. Had Dr. H— remained here, your brother would certainly have admitted his society, though he excluded that of all others; for the doctor's professional skill and real worth as a man, notwithstanding the oddities of his character (so well known to us all), render him a favourite with Sir Eliot, to whom he is also greatly attached.

Do you think it probable that your brother (supposing him to have quitted England) is gone to Copenhagen, to Mrs. Grantley? — or to France, to you — to me; — I know not what to conjecture.

If he should be in Paris, you will of course instantly inform me ; and indeed I think it would not be amiss for you to send a special messenger to your sister, acquainting her with the melancholy circumstances that have taken place here, and preparing her for the reception of her brother, should he think of going to Denmark, by way of trying the benefit of a total change of scene.

As to the domestic affairs of Oakland Park, and in town, they cannot for the present remain in better hands than in those of the land-steward, and of Herbert the house-steward and butler. All things go on with proper spirit and activity ; whilst at the same time I observe a sort of decent sorrow prevails in every department, arising from the deep sense they have of the loss of so excellent a master and landlord.

In a few days you will hear from me again ; in the mean time depend upon my most active endeavours, my dear Lady Alford, and rest assured that no exertions on my part shall be wanting,

either to find the retreat, or ascertain the death, of my valued friend.

Condolements on such an occasion as this are useless, not to say frivolous—we can each feel for the other. I may have lost a man highly esteemed by me; you a brother deservedly beloved. Let us, however, hope that, if still living, he may yet be restored to that society of which he was an honour, and become again the protector of his child, and the ornament of his country.

HENRY CLONMORE.

LETTER II.

The Countess of Alford to the Rev. Henry Clonmore.

Paris.

YOUR letter, my dear Sir, has remained unanswered some days in the pleasing, but I now fear vain hope of receiving better news than your last contained. I had previously, and with extreme regret, seen the account of Lady Howard's death in the newspapers: as we cannot, however, recall life, lamentation is useless; our attention must now be turned to the recovery of the survivor. Can it be possible that there is as yet no intelligence respecting my unfortunate brother? Have then all those means which your friendship and zeal led you to exert, been wholly unavailing? What is become of Dr. H—? — have you seen him yet? As you truly observe, he is indeed as worthy as he is eccentric; and so

thoroughly am I convinced that in his hands alone would Eliot suffer himself to be treated like a child in leading-strings, that I could almost fancy they were at this moment together. At times, so very probable does this conjecture seem, that my mind is at ease ; and yet about an hour ago, regarding his death as positive, I was literally half wild.

Although, from various causes, I had seen very little of my sister-in-law, Lady Howard, I know how fondly Eliot was attached to her, and how worthy she was of his tenderest regard. This very conviction leads me sometimes to think that, unable to survive her loss, his intellects became deranged, and that on quitting home he put an end to his existence. You will say, that in that case his body must have been found. It might not : — recollect his residence, — so near the coast ; from those cliffs we are in a moment gone, and swept away either in deep water or by the receding tides. Had he strayed inland, dead or alive, he must have been by this time discovered : the great reward which has been offered

would have prompted many persons to leave no spot unsearched throughout the united kingdoms ; and yet we see every endeavour has hitherto failed.

Can he have gone away by sea ? — are any boats, or yachts, or vessels of any description missing on that part of the coast ? — have any one of his servants or tenants disappeared ? I regret very much that Herbert and the rest did not at all hazards watch him more narrowly, at least until your arrival. But what gives me most concern is, that the old butler did not immediately send after Dr. H— ; who, I am confident, on hearing of Lady Howard's death, would have contrived to spare a few hours from his invalid nephew, and return to comfort him whom he had known and attended in a professional capacity from a boy.

Eliot, I recollect, had a Newfoundland dog, who, though a terrible annoyance to every one else, was a great favourite with him ; I suppose the same you mention as having been his companion in the park the day before he spirited himself away ; — what is become of this dog, whose

name I do not even remember, for he used to be a great disturber of my flounces and laces? But if he has not accompanied Eliot, enquire for him ; and when you leave Oakland Park, take him with you. Since human sagacity fails, we must have recourse to the brute : according as you feel justified, follow his lead.

You make little or no mention of the child in your letter ; whether you saw it, in whose care it is at present, and whether you think it had better be sent to me, or I wait until my medical folks here permit me to return to England ?

I hate to talk of myself at such a moment, or I should assure you that all the good I had acquired by change of air, from the brown smoke of London to the blue sky of Paris, was completely lost on the receipt of your letter ; and as the purport of it is now blazed in all the papers, my unfortunate hotel is besieged at every hour in the day with English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish enquiries of — “ Any news yet of Sir Eliot Howard ? ” I have three quarters

of a mind to hang out a bulletin every morning with these words in great long letters — “ Not found — go seek.”

I have already written to Denmark, and to almost every part of the civilised continent where I think he may have chosen his retreat ; and my Lord C—s and M. T—d have set on foot the most diligent enquiries throughout Paris and its neighbourhood : — should, therefore, the best exertions on the part of our worthy ambassador and the sapient French minister fail, we may renounce all idea of his having come to France, as I at first conjectured ; and if the answers from my different correspondents prove equally unsatisfactory, we may either conclude that he has secreted himself in some part of Great Britain or Ireland, or that he is really and truly dead.

* * * * *

The express I sent to Copenhagen is just returned ! — he brings me a letter from my sister Grantley, to whom according to your advice I wrote the same day. — Now for news !

* * * * *

Surely nature never formed a brother and sister so opposite as this pair, fire and snow, air and earth do not more widely differ in quality than Eliot and Jane, and yet they are both excellent in their kind.

Would you believe it possible that the following note is, word for word, the answer to a letter announcing the sudden decease of a charming sister-in-law, and the alarming absence, perhaps death, of an affectionate brother? — and having read this note, will you credit my assertion, that a more worthy woman, a better wife, a fonder mother, a warmer friend, (no, I mean a more *sincere* friend, for there is not a spark of warmth in her composition,) does not exist than my sister Grantley?

You call me in your letter Eliot's *best* beloved sister: there you are wrong, my good sir; beloved, I allow, but not best. He preferred me for a playfellow, it is true, being nearer his own age, but Jane was his friend and confidante, and ever in matters of consequence (having as you know been left by the death of our

father very young his own master) followed her advice even when contrary to his own wishes or judgment, and ever in contradiction to mine.

On such occasions, of course, I used to sulk and pout, and accuse him of loving me less because I was only his half-sister, and Jane more, because she was his whole and entire sister, as I called her, (you of course remember both our mothers well,) when he would restore peace by observing, “ You, my pretty Caroline, like me, being very young, speak only from the heart; whilst Jane, our wise senior, calls her head into the debate.” And the event ever proved that we were in the wrong, and she was in the right.

Now read her letter, and let me comment upon it.

“ DEAR SISTER,

Copenhagen.

“ Lady Howard’s death is indeed very much to be regretted, particularly as she has left a child behind her, and that child a girl. — Eliot has not been here; should he come, I will let you know. If he

marries again, I hope it will be a person who will be kind to his little daughter.

“ Mr. Grantley is still attached to the —, and I do not hear any likelihood of his being recalled, at least while this peace lasts, which some seem to think will be of no long duration. This climate certainly does not agree with him, and if his cough continues, we shall return to England for a few months.

“ Mary and Edward, to whom you send your love and presents, are dead ; they died about six weeks since, within a few days of each other.— Mr. Grantley joins me in affectionate remembrance, and in best wishes for the preservation of your health.

“ I am, dear sister,

“ Your’s most truly,

“ JANE GRANTLEY.”

Now you, my friend Clonmore, may advance, that this letter is a pattern of plain simple sound sense and reason, the truth, and nothing more nor less than the truth. You may also point out that the death of her children (her only children

left !) has absorbed, or rather blunted, that sensibility which would otherwise have been acute, on hearing of her brother's misfortunes ; but, my dear sir, you are altogether mistaken.

The fact is this ; Jane, whilst still very young, as I have been told, adopted a sober, steady, sure-footed walk through life, which she has hitherto strictly kept to, and in which she seems determined to persevere to the end of her days. — Eliot and I having to travel the same road at the distance of some ten and fifteen miles (years) or so behind her, often make a dead stop, then take a spring forward, sometimes bound to the right, and more frequently, I am sorry to say, to the *left* : — now and then we are benighted ; we lose ground by retreating, get swamped when following a Will-o'-the-wisp, and scratched by a heedless fall among thorns and briars.

This is the present situation of the three : — Eliot has suffered his passions (however laudable) to play the Jack-o'-lanthorn with him, and is gone the deuce knows where, (begging your re-

verence's pardon.) I, confined to a sofa, with my whimsical nerves, am as helpless as if at the bottom of a gravel-pit by the way-side ; whilst Jane, our old jog-trot, walks deliberately onward : — she meets with impediments, it is true, on the high road of life, but conscious that she did not turn out of her way to *seek them*, convinced that they are placed there by no power or fault of her own, she quietly steps on one side, (or steps over them,) disengages her petticoats without tearing a thread, and pursues the even tenour of her course, aware that the hand of her Maker beckons her to the end of her journey, and that all her aim is to reach that one point in peace, security, and honour.

Thank me, Clonmore. — Not a bad subject for your sermon next Sunday ; but pray do understand my motive for dwelling so long, and apparently so out of season, upon sage Mrs. Grantley's character. — It is, that Eliot may be induced, when found, for I will not hear of his death, to go immediately to her. — You would, advise him, on the contrary

to come to me, because with me you are well acquainted, and with my sister not at all. Did you know Jane, I should soon lose all preference in your opinion, and I am only astonished that Eliot had not made you acquainted with her character and temper long ago.

For Heaven's sake, therefore, and for the sake of this stray sheep when we do find him, send him to Copenhagen.— Believe me, a mind such as Mrs. Grantley's is best suited to the irritable state of feelings under which, poor fellow, he no doubt at this time labours. *I* resemble him too much to be of any service towards blunting those keen sensations which a thousand daily occurrences must put to the proof. I should but nurse the disease; Jane will in time cure it; and with so gentle and loving a hand, so wholly without obtrusion, nay, almost without intention, that he will find his heart healed, and never have felt the remedy.

I know her well: she will listen to his ravings, his lamentations, his most bitter

complaints, with the sweetest patience imaginable, and in the middle of them ask him to stoop for her pincushion ; or, as she once did when he was storming against a groom, who had lamed his favourite mare, request him to hold some cambric she was cutting by a thread. I wish you could have seen his face at that moment ; I have it now before my eyes. As he was not at that time so well acquainted with her strange manners, he perfectly stared with astonishment and incredulity, to find out whether this turn-off proceeded from *finesse* or *naïveté*. (Pardon me, but we have no synonymous words in our language.) A smile of conviction followed the stare, and by all the charms of Omphalé, if he did not sit down as calm and appeased as a wild boar, and do as he was bid. Yes, Clonmore, it is a fact, Jane for a full hour will hear him bewail his lost happiness, his present anguish, and future hopeless prospects, and then enquire whether he thinks Iceland moss or candied horehound best for Mr. Grantley's cough.

Now, were *I* to act thus, he would fling from me in superlative heroics, knowing that I *was* acting, and make no ceremony of calling me an unfeeling, frivolous wretch ; but, conscious that Jane speaks from singleness of heart, he pauses for a moment, like the high-mettled steed at the tap of its rider, couples a sigh with a smile, and stoops for the pincushion, holds the cambric, or prescribes for the cough, or moss or horehound.

Send him to Jane, send him to Copenhagen, my dear sir : mad Hamlet was forwarded to England to recover his senses ; Eliot will recover his only in Denmark.

I write in better spirits than when I began ; for I feel confident we shall soon hear some news, and pleasant news, concerning him ; if not, in spite of my medical staff, expect me on your side the Channel, when, (that is, nerves permitting,) no part of our island, or its rebellious neighbour, Erin, will I leave unsearched, until I find him who is to

me (particularly now that he is out of reach) the dearest object on earth.

Ever one of your and your Louisa's best friends,

CAROLINE ALFORD.

LETTER III.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to the Countess of Alford.

Oakland Park, Dorsetshire.

I HATE all mystery, all suspense ; therefore, in few words, my dear madam, learn that Sir Eliot, thank Heaven, is still living, and in one of the Canary Islands, but which of them I am as yet unable to discover.

Shortly after the receipt of your last letter, I went to town, resolved to set every enquiry on foot, and, above all, to make it a point to see Dr. H—— ; but I had not been more than three hours in London, when a servant from Oakland Park arrived, with the distressing news that your little niece had been seized the night before with convulsions, or some disorder to which they were the prelude, and that her life was despaired of. Requesting Louisa to send immediately to Dr. H——'s house, and enquire as to the fate of my letters to him, and inform him

of our subsequent proceedings, I set off on my return to Dorsetshire, slept in my chaise, and arrived just in time to hear the village surgeon, who had been called in by Morton the nurse, and old Herbert, declare that all fears were over, and that the dear child had only to be kept quiet.

The next evening I was sitting alone in the nursery, — that same room which I had not entered since the day when I saw therein the beautiful mother sucking her first-born infant. What a contrast it now offered! — a small candle, in a shade at the further end, threw a gloomy light around; not a sound was to be heard. I had sent away the nurse and the child's maid to their supper, in the servants' hall, saying, I would watch Claudio; and I sat down by the side of the little crib bed in which she lay in a profound sleep. Poor deserted babe! its mother dead, its father absent, itself oppressed by sickness, it appeared a lily nipped from its parent stalk, and left to wither on the ground.

As I held her feverish little hand in

nine, and fixed my eyes upon her innocent, sleeping face, on which the light partially fell, I could not avoid saying aloud, “ When I last kissed you, my poor forsaken child, it was in your mother’s arms ;” and, mechanically, as I spoke I turned my face towards a distant window, near which Lady Howard had been then seated. At the same instant, a sudden shock, like a tremendous weight, seemed to fall upon my brain : there, on the same sofa, on the very same spot, I now clearly distinguished, sitting, a figure in black.

I certainly did not faint, but my nerves were more completely shaken than were ever your’s, my dear Countess, at the sight of an earwig or a frog ; and I recollect uttering a sort of a tremulous howl, which would have had a wonderfully fine effect in an Irish funeral, but which only now served to awaken and terrify the child. Her screams increased, and, as I started up, she stretched out her little arms, calling on nurse and Martha, and papa and mamma, by turns, not one

of whom were within hearing, to protect and sooth her.

Ashamed of my unmanly and ridiculous fears, which your ladyship must allow me to place to over fatigue of body, and great anxiety of mind, I first pacified Claudy, and then went up close to this formidable still-sitting figure, the cause of all the mischief, whom I found with one leg thrown across a chair, deliberately taking snuff.

“ So, Clonmore,” said the gruff voice, “ turned nurse, are you ? I thought you had enough of that work at home : your good woman makes you give a hand now and then, eh ? loves you the better for it ? Why, what the plague is the matter with the fellow ?” (perceiving that, on recognising who it was, my emotions took a new turn) “ did you not hear me come into the room at this door, as the old woman left it at that yonder ? I made noise enough. Why, you gave as famous a start as the best Macbeth of them all, — *out-Kembled* it, faith ; but, instead of an ‘ Oh ! ’ you should have cried, *Avaunt !* and as for

that young squaller, she has a fine pipe of her own."

If I am right as to his mode of expression, you, my dear Lady Alford, may easily guess I was now shaking hands with Dr. H——; and you may also form some idea of the innumerable questions I poured upon our worthy physician; but, as we have often remarked, instead of the medical line, he would have cut a capital figure in the diplomatic; for it is as vain to expect a direct answer from him as from my Lords M—— and C——. To my simple question of, where and how is Sir Eliot, the answer was,

"The roads are confoundedly heavy, and the night dark; I was full two hours coming the last eight miles."

As I make it a point of never humouring humourists, not even our dear and respected Hippocrates, I did not repeat my question; but, on seeing Claudy still awake and restless, I returned to the chair at the side of her bed, and having adjusted her little cap and night-dress, I composed, and hushed, and patted her shoulder gently, until convinced she was

again asleep. As Dr. H—— justly observed, I had often shared these tender nursery cares with my Louisa, who did not, on that account, respect or love me the less.

The nurse and the maid returning soon after from their supper, I resigned Claudio to their care for the night, and proposed to the doctor to adjourn to the library. Having first examined the state of the child, he gave directions to the nurse, and then prepared to descend, by depositing his snuff-box in his pocket, putting on his shovel hat, and grasping his gold-headed cane, which answered the purpose of a crutch.

Whilst opening the door with one hand, I offered my other arm to the Doctor and his gout, and led him carefully, through various intricate passages and lobbies, safely down stairs, though, as usual, he railed at me the whole way, as thus: — “ Why do you hurry me, you puppy? do you think you are jumping down the steps of your pulpit? By the vengeance, sir, if you hold the candle in that fashion, you’ll burn the

house ; or do you want to set fire to my hat?"

Having at last deposited him in the largest chair in the library, I rung for lights, and at his desire ordered tea. Now, thought I, for some communication — no, not a word ; and I honestly confess, that, had I not been withheld by my respect for his age, his profession, his character for universal benevolence, (not to speak of his sterling friendship for myself,) I could with pleasure have snatched that eternally-opening snuff-box out of his hand, and rammed it into the fire.

Being forced to vent my feelings in some way or other, I snatched up an Edinburgh Review, and pointing out to him a particular passage, as of professional interest, asked his opinion of that. "It won't do, Clonmore," replied he, looking up, and smiling archly, as he poured the tea to and fro from cup to saucer : — "it won't do."

Tea was at length over, his boots exchanged for slippers, his snuff-box fairly pocketed for the night, the candles

snuffed, and the fire most furiously poked, when he launched out at once with —

“ So you have been putting advertisements in the papers, have you ? and setting all the gossips and news-mongers, male and female quidnuncs, in the three kingdoms, prating, have you ? draining fish-ponds for a drowned baronet, raking sea-weeds for a noble corpse, overhauling travellers, and setting the machinery of the police at work ? and what good have you done by all these frolics ? — a man chose to walk out of his house, and could not you wait patiently until he chose to walk in again ? ”

From these words, I naturally concluded that Sir Eliot had accompanied the Doctor to Oakland Park, that he was then in the house, and had, perhaps, retired to bed. Under this impression, I seized one of the candles, and was leaving the room hastily and in silence to convince myself of the truth, when, with almost provoking calmness, he exclaimed,

“ Call to him, he’ll hear you, that is, if he can : — his ears being at this mo-

ment nearer to Cape Bojador in Africa, than Cape Lizard in Cornwall."

With a boyish petulance, of which I was on reflection heartily ashamed, I replaced the light on the table, and threw myself again in my chair, saying

"It is in vain, I see, Doctor, to expect any intelligence from you concerning Sir Eliot, I shall, therefore, to-morrow make enquiries in another quarter, as to where and how he is."

"*Where*, I have already told you, at least implied, that he was in the Canary islands: it is not so long since you left school, — you might remember that scrap of Geography. — *How* is another question — but if in the state I left him, tolerably well."

"*You left him!*" I exclaimed, with astonishment.

"Yes; we had a pretty trip of it together, just fifteen days going out, but a confounded long one coming back. — My poor nephew though has hopped the twig, I suppose you have heard of that — he is dead."

All fears for your brother's safety being

by this explanation completely done away, such is the caprice of human nature, that I now felt rising within me sensations of anger and disappointment — such strange unfriendly and mysterious conduct ! I thought I would scarcely allow myself to acknowledge that the most poignant sorrow and despair could justify it, and as I hastily traversed the room, strange to say, filled at once with joy and vexation, whilst Dr. H —— was occupied with making another violent attack upon the fire, I, without disguise, expressed my feelings, concluding with “ I could not have acted thus.”

“ No,” said he, laying down the poker, and throwing his leg over a neighbouring chair, one hand in his pocket, and the other playing with the spectacle-case on the table ; “ No, neither could *I*, when I was a younker. I had then, and you have still your bread to get. We are not rich enough to play the fool, but had I or you a rent-roll of forty thousand pounds, we could afford to be a couple of as fine blockheads as any in the kingdom.”

“ You think, then, that Sir Eliot’s conduct has been the result of folly ; and yet folly and his name have kept hitherto very wide asunder.”

“ I think no such thing ; but I can tell you, it has been the consequence of madness.”

At these words I stopped abruptly in my walk to and fro, and coming hastily to his chair, said, for an idea of horror flashed across my mind, “ I see how it is, I see it all : he is mad ; he is insane ; and instead of being gone abroad, is now confined in some private bedlam in England.”

“ You deserve to be shut up in Bedlam, or public or private,” he replied, with warmth, turning around, and looking up at me ; “ Have I lived to the age of fifty-eight, to be told, by a clerical whipper-snapper, thirty years my junior, that I assert a falsehood. I told you, sir, he was in the Canary Islands ; what right have you to deny this, and assert he is in an English mad-house ? Shaking the room with your tragical strides, and tossing your arms in the air, as if you

were banging your red velvet cushion, driving your hearers before you into heaven, and preaching peace in a thunder-storm of words. Sit down, sit down, sir!" he cried, raising his voice to a roar, and I actually obeyed him, with as much submission as ever poor admiring Boswell obeyed Johnson the Imperative.

After a long pause, during which the Doctor bit his nails and stared at the fire, he attempted to continue in the same strain, but his voice failed him. I felt the cause, and leaning forward, took and pressed his hand, with much more emotion than ever I did that of a fine lady, saying, " Dear sir, forgive my folly?"

" It was to avoid such hot-brained romantic puppies as yourself, though you are an A.M." continued the Doctor, in a subdued tone, " that he smuggled himself out of the kingdom for a few weeks. I condemned him at the time, but I now see the crazy Baronet was right after all, in resolving to be master of his own person and leisure. Why, if a man had all his wits about him, your high frolics would scatter them abroad. I have told

you he is in one of the Canary Islands, but which of them, you shall not hear from me: once the track is known, well-meaning officiousness will, by following, dodging, and surrounding him, set him off again on the wander; and if he should take it into his addled pate to go to Iceland, or Tangataboo, I desire *you'll* convoy him thither, and not I.—Let me hear no more of either of you."

"Never fear, Doctor: Sir Eliot, I assure you, shall never be molested by my officiousness. I am well convinced of the old remark, 'an imprudent friend does more injury than a professed enemy.' You may therefore rely upon my word, that I shall never attempt to disturb his retreat; and with respect to my having given such painful notoriety to the business, the very circumstances fully justified all I have done. Was it not natural to feel some surprise and alarm at the conduct of a man of Sir Eliot's rank in life, and interest in the country, leaving his house suddenly, on foot, unattended, perhaps without money, certainly without

a change of clothes, neither acquainting his servants, writing to his friends — ”

“ Ah, there, there’s the plague of riches. Had the Baronet been a poor man instead of a monied man, he might, like honest Goldsmith, have put a clean shirt in one pocket, a book and his flute in the other, and lifting the latch of his hovel, have set out and trudged over Europe, before you or any one else would have stirred a finger, or cried, ‘ hollo ! ’ to prevent him.”

“ Granted, Doctor. — But, however, honours are divided between the rich Baronet and the poor poet : my children, a thousand generations to come, will be familiar with the name of Goldsmith, whilst my great-grandson may never have heard of *one* Sir Eliot Howard.”

The Doctor made no reply. Whilst leaning forward for his great coat, which hung upon a chair at too great a distance for him to reach, he had nearly lost his balance and fallen on the fender, when, luckily, I started up and saved him, at the same time observing, why had he not desired me to reach it to him.

“ Had your eyes been where they ought to be,” he observed, “ *present*, instead of *absent*, you would have seen what I wanted.”

He then took from a side pocket of the coat, which he let fall upon the ground, a large black leather pocket-book, and turning to the table, opened it, and shook out several letters. This led me to remark how singular it was, that he had not written a single line of explanation to myself or to Lady Alford, at Paris, before his departure from England, and to enquire whether he had received my letters sent to him from Oakland Park.

“ And what *took* you to Paris at such a time? No sooner was peace proclaimed, than you my reverend chap, and that giddy-brained, frolicksome young Countess, with her old dowager mother-in-law, must be off like a leash of rockets to France. I see how it will turn out, — treading on a net which will soon enclose you all; running into the snare with your booby eyes open. — I hope when the grand Corsican fowler draws

the noose close, not one of you fools of English partridges on French ground may escape."

As there was no occasion to enter on politics at this hour, I avoided any direct answer to this *kind* and *patriotic* wish, and only remarked, in reply, that business had taken me abroad for a short time, otherwise I had not quitted my family and parochial duties for merely curiosity or pleasure.

"And on what business did you go upon, you puppy?"

This, though bluntly spoken, was accompanied by a look of such benevolent interest, that my ill-humour and sturdiness vanished for the remainder of the evening. — Neither could I forget, at that moment, that such was precisely the look, and such nearly the words, when, on being consulted by the deceased Lady Howard, as to the presentation of the living I now hold, he said, "Give it to that puppy yonder."

I briefly stated that I had gone to France to bring back a youth who is to be placed under my care for a few years,

with the view of learning the English language, and pursuing his other studies; but, principally, to be out of the reach of the law of conscription. — I added, “ He is a very fine young man, and —”

Here the Doctor burst into one of his tremendous laughs, which ended in saying, “ And I suppose the gay Countess went to France upon the same errand, to bring back a French youth, a fine young man: or has she crossed the water, to judge with her own beautiful eyes, (he *did* say beautiful), which has the yellowest face, the First Consul, or his *arch* minister ?”

Upon my remarking gravely that your health was delicate, and that the air of France had been recommended by your physicians, the Doctor’s raillery increased: — “ Yes, the wholesome air of midnight balls, and flirtations at the Tuilleries, the pure air of the French Theatre, of the Palais Royal, of routs, parties, and masquerades. — Had the pretty widow asked my advice before she went off, which she took ’special care not to do, I should have prescribed six

days in the week, a dinner with Charley Fox, a rubber with Madame la Consule, and a pas-de-deux with the handsome Eugene."

Oh how I longed for you, my dear Lady Alford, to inflict upon him your usual punishment, that of stealing his snuff-box from his pocket, and not restoring it but upon promise of better behaviour.

He then threw me three or four sealed letters, directed to your ladyship, to me, to Herbert, and to a person who has charge of Sir Eliot's house in town. These letters, it seems, the Doctor, on leaving England with your brother, had given in charge to a servant of his own to forward by the post, instead of which, through a carelessness that has deservedly lost him his place, the Doctor, on his return from the Canaries, found every one of these truly important letters lying on the table in his study, in the very same spot where he had himself sealed and directed them.

My information is now brought to a close ; and to sum up all, in a few words,

the object of our affection and anxiety is living in one of the Fortunate Islands, whither he was accompanied by Dr. H—, and his favourite dog Carlo.— There he intends remaining until the return of spring, when, most probably, we shall have him again amongst us, restored to health, and peace of mind, though not to happiness.

In the interim, the child is to be placed under your care, on your return to England, but on no consideration whatever to be taken to France. Her present nurse, Morton, is warmly recommended to your favour, with wishes that you may continue to her the care of Claudio ; and finally, you are requested, according to your own pleasure and convenience, to make Oakland Park your rural head-quarters.

As I can be of no further service in this unhappy business, and that all my attempts to find out the name of the island to which Sir Eliot has retired, have ended in the Doctor's seriously assuring me, that he was bound to secrecy by your brother himself, I shall only re-

main in London until Louisa is sufficiently recovered from her late confinement to go back to Wiltshire, when I shall return to Paris to receive my young pupil, St. Eloi, from his fond and anxious parents.

If you and the Dowager Countess will then accept my escort back to England, I shall be most happy ; and happier still, should *you* feel inclined to comply with your old schoolfellow's wishes, and spend with her a month or two at Bloomfield Rectory. To bribe you to consent, we shall have little Claudy with us ; and if any other inducement were necessary, let me add, that our infant stranger is a girl, as you wished and prophesied it should be. Be assured, Lady Alford, that your society will give the utmost pleasure to your very sincere and attached friends, Louisa and

“ HENRY CLONMORE.”

LETTER IV.

*The Countess of Alford to the Rev. Henry
Clonmore.*

AND so Eliot is really alive after all!—a good-for-nothing fellow!—and he has perched himself, a widowed *turtle-dove*, on the top of a rock in the Atlantic Ocean! I think he had better have staid by the crib-bed of his child, and patted her to sleep, in your fashion. If the spirits of the departed *are* permitted to hover round us mortals, do you not imagine such conduct would have better pleased that of its deceased mother?

But my good friend, whilst writing to me, did you fancy you were composing a second Castle of Otranto, or a Udolpho, that you thought it necessary to manage a surprise with such magical effect?—I always observed a strong tinge of the romantic in your composition, as well as in Eliot's, and you have now confirmed my

idea. When you mentioned seeing a figure in black in the nursery, why not at once have added, it was Dr. H—? No: you led me to think it was either a ghost, or my living brother. The latter conjecture being the most reasonable, I no sooner glanced my eye over that line, than I started from the sofa, forgetting I was an invalid, incapable of the smallest exertion, crushed your letter in my hand, and not being able to declare whether I intended to laugh or cry, actually flourished my pretty feet in the air, in a *pas seul*, before they could get me to swallow a bumper of hartshorn and water.

And when I read on, oh how provoked I was with myself for having shown one glimpse of uneasiness for so ungrateful an object! — a worthless, selfish wretch, to steal from all the friends who loved him with such tenderness; — an obstinate, sulky fellow, to bind Dr. H— to secrecy, lest we should write to him or follow him. I follow him! None but crows and eagles can reach him there, at his Fortunate Islands, as you call them. I shall not be surprised to hear (you, doubtless, know

wherefore) that he has roosted on the Peak of Teneriffe, among eternal frosts and snow. These may, certainly, in time, cool the mad ardour of his brain, the fiery temperature of his nature. Yet, had he remained in England, some remedy as effectual, and more tender, might have been found.

The man who suffers from affection to woman, will ever find among women his warmest friends, — we feel so much gratified that it is in the power of our sex to endear itself thus to the honest heart of man. —

Eliot in sickness and in pain has sought a foreign pillow whereon to lay his poor distracted head, a foreign hand to feel his fever's pulse : — ungrateful brother ! in losing his wife, did he lose all who loved him ? — This unkindness to me, this unfriendliness to you, this total envelopement in self, and entire abandonment to his own feelings regardless of ours, is what I never can account for, or forgive.

That odious Dr. H—— ! thus to spirit him away, to put a knife into a madman's

hand, (for to a diseased mind, I should imagine solitude is destruction,) and instead of plucking the feathers from his wild goose wing to assist in pluming them! —

In the name of common sense what the deuce has Eliot to do with the Canary Islands now! — he was born at Teneriffe I grant, for there, as you may have heard, his mother died giving birth to him, but has no other interest in the place whatever. When he *was* thinking of exile, better at once have gone to St. Helena, he has now done things only by halves. —

My belief is that he is wholly deranged, and that the voyage altogether was on Dr. H——'s part a desperate attempt at remedy. — In that case, poor dear Eliot! though I reproach, I must ever love him: — even at the best, he has been and is now acting under the delirium of a fever, a temporary insanity, and under such circumstances I ask myself ought I to take offence at any insult however cruel, or conduct however violent. — Ought we not rather when he does come back en-

deavour to sooth and protect him, and at the return of health rejoice with the most sincere and unbounded affection. — Dear, dear brother, stay then in the spot chosen by yourself until your heart shall be healed, and then welcome back to England and your friends. —

With respect to arrangements concerning Claudio, Nurse Morton, and Oakland Park, and my visit to Bloomfield Rectory, your fruitful lady, and her new-born bantling, we will talk over those affairs when we meet ; and as to our old Physician and me, do pray leave us to fight our own battles.

I must now finish my letter and dress ; Paris is in an uproar of joy and felicity, yet no one knows the cause. — The St. Elois and I, with half a score more good folks, are going this morning to the Tuilleries, and the Louvre, and from thence to see the Consular Guard reviewed. — The cannon are firing, drums beating, flags flying, eagles flapping, and the air echoing with rapturous shouts, and the soul-exhilarating strains of the beautiful Consular march.

Farewell, Reverend! The white horse
is led under the windows of our hotel,
and we must run to see the rider mount.

“ With love to Louisa and bairns,

“ I am your well-wisher,

“ CAROLINE ALFORD.”

LETTER V.

The Countess of Alford to the Rev. Henry Clonmore.

Park Place, London.

TWELVE months are nearly elapsed, my dear sir, since I lost a brother, you a friend; since which period I make no doubt your prayers have been as fervent as my own, mine were incessant, that he either might be restored to us, or that we might receive intelligence directly from himself.

Our prayers are heard, Eliot has written to me, and though I suppose you may have received letters from him by the same fleet, I cannot let a day pass without communicating this to me welcome news.—A stranger might have concluded the post had brought me a warrant for my death, such a vast profusion of tears did I shed on this joyful occasion.

Mrs. Grantley (or widow Grantley, as she chooses now to be called, poor fellow ! he died at Copenhagen, never lived to see England again) was sitting at my side when the packet arrived, with little Claudy standing at her knee, for whom she was busy measuring and cutting out frocks.

Having opened the letter, I screamed “ from Eliot !” and thrusting it into my sister’s hand, snatched Claudy to my bosom, covering her dear little face with tears and kisses.

The next moment I was tempted to throw every scrap of muslin, patterns, scizzars, threads, tapes, and bobbins out of the window — no, this instance of Jane’s supineness is scarcely to be credited. — Without the smallest change of voice or variation of feature, she said in reply — “ Stop a moment, Caroline, I have only this sleeve to cut out, and I will clear the table.”

Locke himself would have been puzzled to know, what clearing the table had to do with reading my letter ! —

Oh these hearts of snow ! — how one

sister can be born with a flame in her bosom, and the other with a lump of ice, is past my comprehension. — As to poor Eliot, to judge from his correspondence, his nature is become a mixture of both, each preponderating in turn — now all fire, now all despair — he that was once so uniformly active, brilliant, and enthusiastically wild.

Another packet! and from you! thanks, my dearest friend, for this very considerate kindness. — We will then exchange letters, I have just received Eliot's to you, and I herewith send you his to me. I know you will read it with the same attention and indulgence I did, and join with me in pitying this beloved and unhappy brother, and forgiving his apparent neglect.

He has no reason to accuse his friends of seeking to violate his retirement, we have all respected it even so far as not to hazard a letter to that part of the world, confiding it is true in the faithful promises of Dr. H—— to reveal the secret, should circumstances render him

justified in so doing. Eliot has at length, of his own accord, broken the seal of mystery ; and as he has been indulged in solitary grief to the extent of his own wishes, we may now reasonably conclude that he will soon return to the habits of common life, and become once more a social and useful being among his fellow-mortals.

He thinks he has regained his usual serenity, and is once again at peace ; I hope it may not prove the deceitful calm of a half-spent volcano : but I detain you too long from the perusal of his romantic billet-doux, for such it is, though speaking of the dead, and addressed to a third person. As you are not blessed, however, with the patient apathy of our sister Jane, perhaps Eliot's letter has been read before this of mine, — even so, I forgive you, for I am doing exactly the same by yours. —

I have laid by your letter, and must now bid you and Louisa good by, that I may devour his with eyes and heart.

“ CAROLINE ALFORD.”

LETTER VI.

Sir Eliot Howard to the Countess of Alford.

Teneriffe.

IF ever my dearest Caroline for one moment doubted that she was still beloved by me with the most warm and unabated affection, she has done me injustice: though deprived of all that could render life desirable, I was not so selfishly wrapped in sorrow, as never to bestow the kindest thoughts on those dear friends whom I had left behind.

How the first few dark months passed, on my leaving England, I scarcely myself know, but of this I am convinced, madness, irremediable madness, would have been the consequence of a longer stay in that spot, once to me a heaven on earth.

Before the faint spark of reason was for ever quenched, it seems to have guided me from a place, wherein, every object reminding me that I had become, by

one sudden and unforeseen blow, the most forlorn and wretched of human beings, I might have languished for the remainder of my days a confirmed lunatic under the care of M——'s keepers, from such horrors it pleased Providence to snatch me.

The first intentions of a widowed heart, were to immure myself in the tomb of all my happiness, to spend the remnant of my life within those walls where she had breathed her last, and to devote myself to the rearing of my dear and motherless child; but upon trial, Caroline, it would not do — my fortitude wholly failed, and in less than a week I looked round on the scene of my abandonment with the jealous and glaring eye of a maniac.

You shall judge — I took up a book, intending to force my attention and read: the first words that met my eye were these, written by her hand on a blank cover, “ The gift of my beloved husband on my birth-day.” — Instead of clasping it to my heart (oh such idle fancies belong only to the hours of love

and courtship!) I dashed it from me, to the farthest extent of the room, and with a violence that the mere observer might have mistaken for the feelings of hatred.

— I opened a portfolio, and the next moment the carpet was strown with her torn and disfigured drawings. — I threw up the lid of the piano — oh how I delighted in the horrible and jarring discord made by the blows of my frenzied hand.

On her dressing-table lay a bunch of carnations. I had gathered them on the morning of her death, and brought them to her, as she sat at the looking-glass, arranging her hair. They were now withered; but they had outlived the beautiful hand which had held them, the smile which had thanked me.

I wandered from room to room, and every object I met with seemed to be herself, and yet to say, “I am gone.” A bonnet, a stray glove, a shoe, a ribbon, a shawl, no matter what — no where, through our part of the house, could I turn my eyes, without meeting some memorial of my lost Claudina.

I fled into the garden. Here were her plants, her flowers, her tame liberty-birds, as she called those which she daily fed upon the lawn, under our window, with crumbs of bread from the breakfast-table. Every thing reminded me of her.

Agreeable to a mutual compact, formed in the days of courtship, we always breakfasted alone, in a small boudoir adjoining her dressing-room. No third person was ever admitted to that dear repast ; and, to prevent even the necessity of servants attending it, we were supplied from without by means of a turning cupboard in the wall. In consequence of this arrangement, though our house was, at different periods, full of company, we were secure of enjoying our favourite meal in privacy and quietness. This hour formed a happy contrast to the remainder of the day, which was wholly devoted to our friends and guests.

A few mornings after my loss, I attempted to breakfast in the accustomed place ; but I found it would not do, and

I removed for that purpose to my own dressing-room. This change certainly did afford me relief; and the idea then occurred, that instant removal from Oakland Park, would prove the only effectual step towards subduing my mind to an humble resignation to the will of Providence, and preparing me so far to conquer despair, that I might yet do justice to my poor child, by devoting those cares solely to her, which the dead no longer required.

My first intention was to go to Bloomfield Rectory, and write from thence to my friend Clonmore, who was in France; but, on further consideration, I determined not to carry grief and despondency into his happy family, particularly as I had lately heard from him that his wife was removing to town, to prepare for her expected confinement. That pleasing hope was no sooner formed than it was relinquished.

I then turned my thoughts on you, Caroline; but you were in Paris, and the very idea of going thither was horror to me; besides, in your own shattered state

of health, I was conscious of being no very agreeable inmate.

For one moment I determined to set off for Copenhagen, where I was sure of a kind, sincere, though naturally cold reception, from Jane ; but her husband was ailing, and I knew well would feel shy of associating with a man labouring under mental anxiety ; from which, owing to the extreme irritability of his own system, he never failed to suffer severely himself.

“ These are the only three persons on earth,” I said aloud, as in dim twilight I traversed my solitary room, “ the only persons to whom I would wish to unbosom myself ; for all Claudiina’s relations are dead — Colonel and Mrs. Powis, all — all are dead. There is Dr. H—— indeed, one who has known me from my birth. I might go to his house in town ; but the comfortless fire-side of an old bachelor is not exactly suited to a man of my domestic habits.

“ Where, where shall I go ! ” and, at these words I threw myself on the sofa,

as if, in that simple act, expressing the determination to stay at home.

At this moment, the door slowly opening, a figure appeared standing without, as if desirous, yet fearful of intruding. "Come in, Nurse," I said, and extending my arms, took my child, who was half asleep, from her, and for a few minutes gazed fondly and anxiously upon her lovely features ; then exerting myself, I performed my duty of rocking her on my knee, swinging and coaxing so well, that Morton declared with a faint smile, and a full dropping tear, I made a most capital nurse.

Claudy's waist and shoulders, I observed, were decorated with a sash and bows of full pink ; to which pointing, I enquired as to their propriety. Morton understood me, and with hesitation replied, "Why yes, sir, but I need make no change, I think, as yet ; because — the funeral — though you are the best judge, sir. I have every thing ready ; but it seems to me that a baby — and Miss Howard is only just turned of two

years — does look so very dismal in black."

I saw clearly, that respect to my feelings had prevailed over her idea of what was proper, but I returned the child to her in silence. She left the room, leaving the door ajar ; when, in less than ten minutes, as I was repeating the word "*dismal!*" she again appeared, leading in Claudy, whose white frock and pink ribbons were replaced by a suit of black, her neck encircled by jet beads.

Simple and trifling as this incident was, it seemed so exactly to represent the awful suddenness of the mother's fate, that I felt my soul die within me. Thus, thought I, was my life, at one instant, changed from *couleur de rose* to a hue of the blackest die.

I could not again take the child, but going to the window, leaned my arm and head against the frame ; and, on turning round, some time after, was relieved to find myself alone, and the door closed. One of the minor blessings of life is to be attended by feeling and affectionate servants.

Having spent the whole day, and the ensuing night, in revolving whether I should quit my house, or remain in it, the following evening found me in a fever of doubt and perplexity ; unable to decide of myself, and not having one friendly bosom, to whom I could lay open the terrible agitation of my own. In solitude and mental ravings were the succeeding hours of darkness passed ; and though in the possession of thousands, I felt like a houseless wretch, who had not whereon to set his foot.

It is in human nature to be shy of our dependants, where the affections and weakness of the heart are concerned ; I therefore, when in their presence, mastered every sign of emotion : nay, when my servants appeared, I assumed a sort of careless cheerfulness, that often made them examine me with doubtful surprise. Thus passed another night of agony, not to be described.

The next morning I trifled over a breakfast ; held a newspaper in my hand, one word of which I never saw ; then reached my hat, and calling to Carlo,

wandered again into the park. As I had taken the same walk the day before, and returned to dinner, my people were under no apprehensions ; whereas, had they followed me, I should not, perhaps, at this moment be within sight of the volcano of Teneriffe.

The first symptom of insanity may be traced to my shyness of my servants ; their looks, reflecting my own feelings, were daggers to me ; their silence, their caution, their very respect and tenderness, were torture, for all reminded me wherefore they were thus subdued in voice, and manner, and look. Their black liveries and dresses were the next sources of pain. I shut my eyes to avoid the sight, and I found them represented in miniature on the inside of my eyelids. On finding none but *silver* knives allowed me at dinner, I did not speak, but cast on Herbert, my honest faithful servant, a look of savage purpose. Other precautions stole upon my notice ; and this producing hatred towards my preservers, you may well con-

ceive with what rapid strides insanity was gaining possession of my brain.

But to proceed with an account of the events that occurred on the second morning of my strolling with Carlo to the park, whither I went with so determined an air of indifference, that my people were deceived, and did not follow me.

About one hundred yards from the house I met some girls at play, and stood to watch them. Totally regardless of my misfortune, even if they had heard it, they were pelting each other with tufts of loose grass, and with all the jocund frivolity of their age, and continued and loud laughter, were running round the trees, and up and down a steep green slope.

This was the first moment of relief I had felt for many days ; I breathed with more freedom ; an oppressive load seemed taken from my breast, my head, my eyelids ; and, as I struck into a more retired walk, I exclaimed, “ I wish I were among strangers ; were I with those who

know not the cause of my affliction, it would be greatly lessened."

On reaching the root-house near the lake, in the centre of the park, I took out my master-key, and, desiring Carlo to stay without, went in, for the first time since my loss, intending to spend in this, my favourite spot, a few hours before my return to the house.

In building this rustic edifice, (which you, Caroline, had never at that time seen,) no workmen had been employed; it was the labour of my own hands after a little design by Claudina, and was entirely composed of the roots of trees, and other rough timber, and thatched with reeds and canes. The interior displayed two small windows of painted glass, a sort of couch covered with carpet-work, ornamental flower-stands, a work-basket, a book-shelf, a stained lamp, and various other articles, displaying at once the simplicity of Claudina's taste, her industry, and her ingenuity.

No one hitherto had entered this elegant little hermitage, excepting ourselves. It had been consecrated in the

romantic fervour of youth to conjugal friendship, having been built in fulfilment of a promise mutually given before wedlock ; since which day of bliss we had spent in it many a happy hour, in conversation, in reading, or in drawing.

On entering it, I closed the door, and, sitting down upon the couch, quietly looked around me. Never having seen any living object in this place beside my wife, it now seemed filled with her image alone ; and certain of not being overheard, for no one could approach the building within a quarter of a mile without being observed from the windows, I indulged myself in frequently repeating her name. “ Claudiina,” I said, “ I will read to you ; what shall it be ? ”—and, reaching a book, I again seated myself, taking care to leave space sufficient on the sofa beside me for a second person—a small table, with a basket of unfinished work on it, stood immediately in front, in exactly the same position she had left them the day previous to her death.

Would you credit my crazed infatuation? — The book was “ *Mathilde*. ” I read a whole page aloud, and as the branches of the dark fir, and climbing shrubs, and hanging ivy, moved with a gentle noise against the dim and painted windows, I looked up, saying — “ It is so dark, and the print so small, I can read no more.”

I then took up the work that lay on the table, and, after examining the embroidery, enquired, “ Is this the pattern I drew for you, Claudina? — your needle has improved upon my design: little Claudy will look quite grand in this fine new frock.” I laid it down again, and shuddered at the silence that followed my own voice; and when I turned my eyes on the vacant seat beside me, and stretched out my hands to be convinced that all was air — was nothing — was death, — Oh, my God! my God! the horror of that moment! And when, in replacing the work in the basket, violently thrusting it in, my eyes caught the sight of a letter directed to my wife, which being from Mrs. Clonmore, we

had read together on the very day when I was last on this spot; and now, when I looked at the date of the frank! — and in so short a time! — Oh Heaven forgive me! — forgive the horrid transport of that instant: — my God! “ blot out mine iniquity — remember not my sin.”

Caroline, I distress you. I must quit this scene — I will be brief. Could you suppose, that instantly on leaving the hermitage, I walked, without stopping to take either rest or refreshment, nearly twenty miles? I was always a famous pedestrian, you may remember; but, considering the enfeebled state to which I was at that time reduced, this exceeds my proudest athletic performance. In short, instead of turning my face homeward on quitting the root-house, I strode rapidly the contrary way, and avoiding the lodges, leaped over the stone park fence, and gained the turnpike road.

The chain of memory is here broken, but the links, which are wholly wanting in my mind, can be supplied by our old

friend Dr. H——, who, having heard of my wife's death shortly after his return to town, apprehensive of the consequences to myself, had set off instantly for Oakland Park. He had changed horses at the last stage, and was leaning in the corner of his carriage reading a pamphlet, when a sudden stop and outcry from the postillions attracted his attention, — a man was found lying on his face, at his full length, in the middle of the road, seemingly in a fit, over whom stood striding a large Newfoundland dog.

Dr. H—— was no sooner out of the chaise than I was placed in it, soaked to the skin, for the rain was heavy ; and as we were at this time farther from my own house than his in Hampshire, he instantly formed his determination to return thither. The post-boys were desired to turn round their horses' heads, and I was carried, still insensible, to the country residence of our worthy physician.

The rest is easily explained and understood. At this very period Dr. H——

was under the necessity of accompanying to Madeira a nephew whose life had long been despaired of, (he is since dead;) and but for the news of my wife's decease, he would at that time (being free from the gout) have been already on his journey to Falmouth.

Understanding from me, on my recovery, that I had no friend in England in whose care he would feel himself justified in leaving me, yet agreeing to the propriety of not burdening those abroad with my infirmities of mind and body, he was doubtful how to proceed, until, with a sudden renovation of fortitude, I enabled him to decide at once, by declaring I would accompany him to Madeira.

This was indeed the most rational plan that could be pursued, as a total change of scene was the only chance I had of cure. Dr. H— having promised to write to my sisters, to Clonmore, and to Oakland Park, I prepared for my departure, or rather, I should say, I left every preparation to my friend, and was transported from Ma-

² / deira to England with as little ceremony as a bale of goods, and almost as unconscious. The voyage was to me a blank ; a sad delirium followed, during which I fear I often put the patience and humanity of the Doctor to the severest trials ; for, though he endeavoured to make me sensible I was on board a merchant vessel, out in the open seas, and surrounded by good honest sailors in blue jackets and trowsers, I would insist, it seems, that I was in Bedlam — that he was my keeper — and that all my neighbours were as mad, or, rather, were very sensible persons, as ill-treated as myself.

The Doctor's intention was to take me to the Atlantic islands, but certainly not to leave me there ; and yet when he found, on the full restoration of my health and reason, that I was bent on removing, at least for a few months, to Teneriffe, the place of my birth, he acquiesced, and we sailed thither.

After a short stay at the house of a Scottish emigrant merchant of this place, a friend of his, of the name of Balfour,

on whose kindness and humanity he could rely, he only waited to see me removed to the habitation I now occupy at Santa Cruz, when he returned to Madeira, from whence, on the death of his nephew, he sailed to England.

I had entrusted him with letters to all my English friends, requesting him to read them first, and if he judged them to be only the flights of insanity, productive of no good, but a great deal of mischief, to destroy them, otherwise to deliver them as directed. On this subject he wrote to me from Madeira, assuring me he had thrust every one into the fire, reminding me, at the same time, I was in a Spanish country, and that if I did not wish to be the victim of an *Auto-de-fé* myself, as well as my magnificent epistles, not to presume to write again, until Mr. Balfour, (who has much skill in medicine, and who formerly practised at Glasgow,) should give him a favourable report on the state of my pulse. My disorder then took a contrary turn, and I at last extorted from him a solemn promise not to reveal the

place of my retreat, until I should be deemed sufficiently recovered to need no *surveillance*.

And now, my sister, can you forgive my long and seemingly unkind silence? Can you feel for me — can you pity my wanderings, both mental and corporeal, and will you write to me? I know you will. I have passed the probation to which I had condemned myself, of living a full twelvemonth in perfect seclusion; and can now own that my health is, thank God, entirely established, and my mind at once calm and firm. I can, at this day, look back upon the past without that bitter pang, which, formerly shooting at once through heart and brain, withered the one, and burnt up the other. I can, indeed, say at this hour, with the lips of simplicity and truth, “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be his name.”

Neither you, nor my sister Jane, had seen much of Claudina — Clonmore had. You are neither of you aware of the greatness of my loss — he is. Ask of him, enquire of him, was she not a

most gracious being, beautiful and good, tender, affectionate, sensible, and pious. She was — she was all this — and more, much more than I can express. I mean to write to him on this subject.

What ravages these mental convulsions cause to the human frame. I, Jane's younger brother, were we now seen together, might be mistaken for her father. I understand, Caroline, you have got my child in your care, as I wished ; and that our sister, now a widow, and childless herself, is living with you, and that you have been most kind to my poor little Claudio. Heaven bless you both. I have had regular and minute accounts from Dr. H—— of how you all go on ; but we must in future relieve him a little of the burthen of writing, by corresponding with each other.

I see, I guess your astonishment. No, my dear sisters, (for I now address you both,) do not expect me in England. I could not return but at the hazard of a relapse. Never more could I inhabit Oakland Park, or my house in town, where my life was once blessed, and can

be blessed no longer. Here I have recovered serenity and peace, and here I purpose, for the future, residing. We can but be happy on whatever spot we vegetate, and in this small sequestered island, which gave me birth, I am, and hope to remain, comparatively happy.

Could we but look forward on the road of life, instead of journeying blind-folded as we do, how different would be our fate! Had I known I should live to experience the misery of early widowhood — dear as she was to me, I —

A mist is gathering before my sight,
I can write no more.

ELIOT HOWARD.

LETTER VII.

Sir Eliot Howard to the Rev. Henry Clonmore.

Teneriffe.

WHAT need of apologies, Clonmore, between you and me? — Do I not know the state of your mind towards me? — is not mine open to your inspection? — we understand each other.

When did we last meet? — on what occasion? — was it not when I rode over to Bloomfield rectory, to engage you and Mrs. Clonmore to come and celebrate the anniversary of our wedding at Oakland Park?

I fear I shall weary you, my best friend, by my disconsolate letters; but you wish me to write, and on what subject can I but on that with which my whole soul is still occupied, and which whilst I exist can never cease to fill both heart and memory? Besides, you know the full value of the treasure I once possessed — with you my wife had been

long acquainted before I had ever seen her ; — you, therefore, can best bear witness whether I exaggerate her worth, and alone can make allowances for my conduct, which, to a casual eye, must seem the result of weakness more than feminine.

Dr. H—— tells me you have often gone to Lady Alford's, purposely to caress my little Claudio ; that you are as fond of her as of your own children ; and that, owing to some remarkable impression on the child's brain, whenever she sees you she asks for me, enquiring how old I am — how tall — what clothes I wear — when I mean to come home, and other important particulars ? How dear are such trifles to the heart of a parent !

Can I, ought I to confess that nothing gave me more pleasure than to hear, from Dr. H——, that she bears not the slightest resemblance to her mother. I hear you exclaim against this seemingly unnatural emotion, and doubt my sincerity in avowing it. Had I, my friend, loved her mother less, I might wish otherwise ; but as it is, every man is the best judge

of his own feelings ; and I am well assured, that did Claudy resemble the being who gave her birth, I never could feel happy in her sight. To be, at every instant of my future life, tantalized by the look, the features, the voice of Claudina, and she gone for ever ! — No, I could not endure that torment.

I have her picture, a whole-length, by Lawrence, given to me, in some measure, by herself, *after her death*. It now looks down upon me as I write these words. The sight of this I *can* bear ; I can gaze for hours upon this ; I can fancy it hears me when I speak to it, and opens its lips in reply, and moves its deep-blue eyes, as watching me, in silence, when I traverse the room : — all this I can bear ; but another living Claudina, and not my Claudina, my wife ! — No, never could I support that torment.

How full of truth and sensibility is that remark of Dr. Johnson, when speaking of portrait painting : he says, “ *It is an art which diffuses friendship, renews tenderness, quickens the affections of the* ”

heart, and continues the presence of the dead."

This picture was sent to me from Oakland Park, as you perhaps were informed at the time, at my desire, by Dr. H— ; and has, since its arrival here, been closeted with me in a small room, into which no one has access but myself. I was never jealous of the original, but I am of this : it shall be seen by no eyes but mine ; never shall it be profaned even by the admiration of a stranger.

I have drawn the curtain before it, and will endeavour to write with more calmness and connection.

Many of us young men, Clonmore, choose our future wives at balls and plays, parties and races, to all of which most single women go, for the express purpose of captivating the eyes of man : they dress for the purpose, smile for the purpose, laugh, simper, talk, aye and bet among themselves, before they set out, as the old song has it, to "*bring home*

hearts by dozens." How often have I heard my giddy sister, Caroline, thus boast, when springing into the carriage, to drive to some fashionable assembly, flushed with hope and prepared for conquest.

Caroline, it is true, did win a high prize in the matrimonial lottery ; but though her earl was, in fact, caught at first sight by her lovely figure and beautiful face, he, like a wise man, though very young, had the precaution to check his passion, until he had thoroughly enquired — not into the state of her fortune, there let me do him justice — but into that of her temper. He made allowances for the exuberant flow of youthful spirits ; and they were married, and were happy.

Our elder sister, Jane, whom, it seems, all her kind friends had set down, even from childhood, for eternal maidenhood, was one morning, at breakfast, asked by my father, had she any objection to change her name to Grantley, that of a man who had not said a dozen civil words to her in his life, but who had been on the most friendly footing with our pa-

rents for as many years. Jane, notwithstanding her frozen nature, did certainly blush, and hesitate, and throw down a cup of scalding tea, as is usual on these occasions ; but, being pressed by her father, laughed at by me, a wild young boy, and pinched on the arm by Caroline, a still wilder little girl, she at last contrived to say, with very decent composure, “Your choice, sir, shall be mine ;” and this union proved most happy.

I, as you know well, escaped the siren, the nymphs, and the graces that haunt the concert, the ball, and the play : neither was my fate decided in a family party. You, Clonmore, know how and where I first met Claudina ; but you know not how I lost her.

I had been detained at Dorchester, on some high-sheriff business, longer than I wished or expected ; and as soon as I could possibly escape, hastened towards home. It was the anniversary of our marriage ; and disappointed of your company, and that of Mrs. Clonmore, on account of your intended removal to

town the next day, we resolved to spend it entirely alone.

I have read of that feeling called presentiment; nay, I am not ashamed to confess I have, on some occasions, felt it; but, on this day, so buoyant, so exhilarated were my spirits, that I have since reflected I never experienced more delightful sensations than during my ride from Dorchester to Oakland.

On entering the Park I heard the first dinner-bell ring; and apprehensive that Claudina had been anxious at my stay, and perhaps given up all expectations of seeing me that evening, I opened the hall-door, and, striding up three or four steps at a time, booted and spurred as I was, almost ran to her dressing-room. There, on the outside, I found little Claudy, drumming at the door with both her hands, and calling loudly to be let in: — “Open door! — me! — open door! — me!” was repeated in a sweet lisp, but with no small degree of violence.

I suspected that, for some high crime or other, she had, as usual, been put out

of the room, and her nurse rung for ; when, lifting her from the ground, and giving her a fond kiss, which contradicted my words, I said, “ Claudy, naughty girl ? papa will not love naughty girls.” Then, with the child still in my arms, I opened the door and went in, saying, as I entered, “ Claudina, my love, I fear I have made you wait ; but I will be ready in five minutes.” — She was sitting on the sofa opposite the fire, with her back towards me ; lights were burning dimly on the table at which she reclined, and, as I received no answer, I concluded she had fallen into a doze.

Under this idea I walked on tiptoe until I came behind her, when I held Claudy over her shoulder, who, seizing the veil which formed part of her head-dress, stooped, attempting to clasp her mother’s neck, when my attention was, on a sudden, attracted by a long square frame, covered with a green cloth, which rested on the ground against a chair, opposite to me. Suffering Claudy to scramble down over the back of the sofa as well as

she could, I went hastily round to examine this new objct.

I, however, partly guessed what it was, and, consequently, felt no great surprise, though indescribable pleasure, when, on snatching off the cover, I saw the whole-length portrait of my wife, which, according to her directions, had been sent home by Lawrence on that very morning.

Too full of admiration and tenderness for words, I could only, for some moments, gaze alternately, and in silence, upon Claudina and her picture. Oh, Clonmore! how little conscious, then, that I had gained the shadow, and for ever lost the substance!

“ And this is your present to me on our wedding day, my dear Claudina! — and in the very dress you wore, the Scotch plaid, when our eyes first met. Yonder is your bonnet on the ground, and here your little basket, and even the bundle is not forgotten. The localities are also kept; behind you is the gate, and here, at the side, the very hedge that caught your veil. I think

Lawrence might have given *me* a place in the back-ground, and have introduced Rover with some effect. It is an admirable painting ; and as for the likeness ! — Come, rouse yourself, my love, and let me thank you as I ought.”

I rushed to the sofa, threw myself by her side, caught her in my arms, and — oh God ! embraced a corpse !

Yes, Clonmore ! a cold, inanimate, stiffening corpse ! — without warning, without seemingly one pang or struggle, without the slightest previous illness, (as I afterwards collected from the nurse, who brought in the child as usual whilst she was dressing for dinner, from the maid who attended her, and from Herbert, to whom she had given directions, at the door of her room, concerning the delay of dinner until my return, however late,) — without, I repeat, the smallest complaint of any kind — nay, they all asserted they had never seen her look more beautiful or happy — was this excellent creature, in the twenty-sixth year of her age, snatched from life, from her friends, from her child, from her be-

loved and doating husband. She was dead, quite dead — cold, perfectly cold.

I have read of such things — heard of such things : — in magazines, and in newspapers, I have met with a hundred instances of this nature ; and I have perused them with much the same apathy as when reading an account of a sale by auction, or that of a fox-chace. The shaft was now come home to my own bosom, and I felt it — I feel it still.

From the moment of being convinced by the surgeon of the village, who was called in, Heaven knows when, or by whom, that she was past recall, to that in which I saw her coffin placed in the funeral vault, my mind was a blank — a blank, Clonmore ! — I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I remember nothing ! Oh, yes ! I heard one sound — a sound which pierced my brain through and through, and which, even at this distant period, thrills it with madness : — it was the cry of my child, when, screaming with grief uncontrollable, and refusing to be comforted, she called, “ Mamma ! mamma !”

Thus, Clonmore, did I, in one instant, in the twinkle of an eye, as quick as the stroke of lightning, become, from a being who enjoyed every comfort and blessing under the sun, the veriest wretch that crawled upon the earth. In her I had lost my wife, my best friend, my other self, my sincere adviser, my comforter, my bosom counsellor — the only woman I had fondly loved — the only woman who had ever truly loved me ! She was dead, and I still lived ; and yet how often, in the wild effusions of affection and gratitude, I had declared I never could survive her loss ! — The Lord of existence, and of death, he heard these idle words, and in chastisement decreed, “ You shall survive her.”

I can recollect, my good Herbert, the surgeon, and others, removing, during the first paroxysms of my grief, every implement of destruction. — I could not blame them, and to argue would have been impossible ; but had they known, as well as you know what were my principles, they must have been aware, that I look upon a Christian as no more master of his life

than the sun is of its own movements ; — that sun may with as much justice start from its orbit, and refuse to give light to the universe, as man to rush from his station here on earth, and burst an unbidden guest, (or a guest not having on the wedding garment,) into the presence of the Lord of life.

You are aware I speak not of such whose death is the consequence of insanity, to those we may hope mercy will be extended, but that was not precisely my case. Whilst blessed with sufficient reason to feel conscious that suicide was a crime, there was no extenuation of guilt ; — could I, then, the firm believer in the immortality of the soul, by my own sinful act, the very nature of which shuts out all chance of repentance, put an eternal divorce between the pure spirit of Claudina and my own ? — How could I ever hope the reunion of the soul of an *impious* suicide (for the distinction must be drawn, and can be proved) with that of a godly soul recalled by its Maker ? We are told by the divine and blessed One, that in heaven there are

many mansions, or degrees of happiness, but unless enjoying the self-same sphere of beatitude with her, could heaven be a heaven to me?

No, my friend, even in the very extremity of distress, in the very bitterness of despair, the idea of self-destruction never came across my mind ; once, and once only, when in the hermitage in the park at Oakland, the very day on which I quitted my house for ever, wound to the very height of frenzy, I dared reproach my Creator with my loss, shrieking like a maniac, “ Restore her ! O my God restore her, or take me !”—When, at the same instant, I recollect throwing myself on my knees in penitence and remorse, saying, “ Thy will be done.” True, my lips moved not, but what have the lips to do with prayer ?

The suspicions of my people did me injustice — they wounded me most deeply ; but I could not, at that time, justify myself, all the emotions of my soul being absorbed in one dreadful conviction — that I was utterly ruined. — I had looked forward to a wedded life,

even to old age ; I had anticipated becoming the father of sons and daughters, nay, with fond weakness, I had pictured around me a group of grand-children, and I was now widowed — left alone in the world, with one tender fragile flower of a few months growth, which the hand of death, natural or accidental, might deprive me, and I should then be totally childless, perhaps doomed to live the full number of years allotted to man, — childless and widowed.

No, I assert, and ever will maintain, of all miseries, that of losing a wife, your choice, your chosen, your other heart, your twin soul, your inseparable hourly companion, your fellow-labourer in the holy vineyard, is the very climax of earthly sorrow. From the moment our eyes first met, we loved. — She knew not who I was ; I was equally ignorant concerning her ; we were strangers, totally strangers, and yet at that first look, our souls said, — “ We belong to each other ; ” from that hour we never ceased to love, and for eight years she was my pride, my ornament, my heart’s bright sun-beam, my best blessing on this side the grave.

Have I at length made amends for my long silence, which you, Clonmore, it seems so warmly lamented, and which I now most solemnly entreat you to forgive ; or have I wearied you, my friend ? Whether you wish it or not, I must still write to you, for thus my mind is eased, my temper tranquillized, and my tenderness awakened. When writing to the friend of my boyhood and youth, I feel I have not lost all, in losing Claudina.

Write soon, and often ; but first see my child, who, I understand, has, thank God, safely passed through the diseases incident to her time of life. — Speak to her of me, tell her you have heard from me : remember her answer, her questions, her every action, and repeat and describe them to me minutely.

Adieu, Clonmore : may you never experience my present feelings, — so prays, in behalf of yourself and wife,

Your faithful
ELIOT HOWARD.

LETTER VIII.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to Sir Eliot Howard.

Bloomfield Rectory.

CAN I give my dear Howard a more convincing proof of the sincerity of that pardon he condescends to solicit, for his apparent want of confidence and friendship, than by declaring that one of the happiest moments of my existence was that wherein I received his long-expected letter.

I certainly must acknowledge, notwithstanding my high opinion of your religious principles, that I had my fears of your personal safety, until relieved by the explanations of our eccentric friend Dr. H—, by which I found that you were still in the land of life, and a self-banished man.

And now, my dear friend, in sober judgment, what occasion was there for

thus retiring to so remote a corner of the world, that, as Lady Alford justly observes, none but swallows and other birds of passage can attempt to visit you.

You have fled from England, it is true, but can you, have you fled from yourself? And do you not think that your mind would have regained its serenity, and your body its strength, had you, instead of exiling yourself to Teneriffe, crossed the English Channel to us when we were in France, or gone on a tour through Scotland or Wales, or undertaken a *pilgrimage* to Ireland; any measure, in short, rather than become an absentee in so obscure a country, surrounded by foreigners and strangers, who can have no one interest in your affairs, or you in theirs.

You were deprived by the dispensations of Providence of your wife; why should you, in consequence, voluntarily deprive yourself of your child? — *Two* blessings were bestowed upon you by the Giver of all good, and because he thought fit to bereave you of *one*, you indignantly

throw away the *other*! — Is this acting like a Christian, like a man?

In England, you united in your person the characters of husband, father, master, landlord, senator, magistrate, brother, and friend, and you fulfilled the duties of each most faithfully — reverse the medal, and tell me what are you now? Take away the first title, that of husband, and do not all the rest remain? — They do; and now that your mind is once more at ease, they summon you to return, and exercise the respective functions, as heretofore, with honour to yourself, and satisfaction to others.

An unfortunate debtor, or a surviving duellist, or imprudent seconds — a public defaulter, or a private swindler, — or in short any person involved in mystery and misfortune, may feel it convenient to smuggle themselves out of the kingdom, according to Dr. H——'s expression; but how the father of an infant child, a man of considerable landed-property, and a member of the legislature, could let his private and domestic feelings so far

conquer the desire to fulfil his public duties, staggers me not a little.

Dr. H——'s excellent heart cannot be doubted, but his judgment in this affair has, and ever will be, called in question.— Your departure from England, and present residence, are now no secret; and every one, friend and stranger, is at liberty to talk according to his own view of the subject. Hitherto, it must be confessed, no very flagrant enormity has been committed on your part, as the change of scene and climate may have had on your health the most beneficial effects: but to prove that your mind is equally sane, you must be well convinced that an immediate return to England is absolutely necessary.— Under this idea, I have to hope that your letter will be the only one I shall ever receive from Teneriffe, and I have no other correspondent in that island except yourself.

On receiving a line from you, dated from any *English* sea-port, I shall hasten to meet you, that mine may be the first

hand to welcome you back to your native land, for such I must ever assert is Great Britain to you : no matter where you were born.

Every thing at Oakland Park, or at Bloomfield rectory, shall be in readiness for you.— If you fix upon the former, I invite myself, and wife, and perhaps a half-weaned baby or so, to spend a few weeks with you. Of course Lady Alford and Mrs. Grantley, who are now in town, will be in Dorsetshire ready to meet you ; so that all together we shall make a good strong party to chace away the blue devils, who it is very natural should try to make good their footing in a place from which an angel has been for ever removed.

Your feelings and mine with respect to sudden death wholly differ ; but the subject is too diffuse to enter upon at present. — I have only to remark, that in its very nature we are taught the most implicit submission to Heaven : it is so decidedly the act of Omnipotence, so truly the awful word of God, saying,

“ Come,” and he cometh, “ Go,” and he goeth ; that we are compelled at once to acknowledge the Divine will, and to bend to that will in meek resignation. — When death is the consequence of accident, of illness, or of old age, we are permitted, before the last moments, still to hope, to doubt, that life may, by our care and skill, be prolonged ; and we thus become self-acting agents : but far otherwise must it be regarded, when the object, in full health, youth, and spirits, falls at our feet and expires.

To return, however, to the chace of the blue devils, should our attempts be insufficient to drive them away, we shall have a most powerful ally in your little Claudy, for a more boisterous, noisy, self-willed urchin, I never met with.

My boys and girls, though so much older than herself, are literally afraid of her : the only one she will condescend to treat with common civility is little Dudley, who, you may remember, is about her own age, although, from severe illness, my poor child is now less than

half her size. All the good that your Claudy acquires from her aunt Grantley, whom we find a very sensible woman, is rendered null and void by the provoking conduct of her aunt Alford:—the Countess indulges her in every whim, gives her every thing she roars for, and obeys all her infantine and absurd commands.

The child will be wholly ruined, unless put under proper management; and although only three years of age, and a girl, under whose care ought she to be placed? under whose roof ought she to be reared? She has lost her mother, ought you not to supply the maternal place?

Your daughter, your sisters, your tenants, your constituents, your household, and your friend Clonmore, join in summoning you back to England: for their sakes, and your own, comply, and speedily. Trust me, that then, and then only, you will be blest with complete recovery. Your spirits will soon regain their happy equanimity, and your person

its former state of health. Finally, remember, that "*Omnia corporis mala ab anima procedere.*" *

Ever sincerely yours,
HENRY CLONMORE.

* Plato.

LETTER IX.

Sir Eliot Howard to the Rev. Henry Clonmore.

Santa Cruz, Teneriffe.

IT was not without reason, my dear Clonmore, that Dr. H—— once called you, in my hearing, a self-tormentor, and that he often compared you to a thoughtless boy who blew bubbles into the air, expecting they would reach the skies, and fretted because they burst.

I will not trespass on your time or patience, or even your friendship, by asking you to read over my letter ; but, from remembrance of its contents, tell me where found you in it a single passage, a line, a word, that bears the slightest reference to my return to England ? — Why, man, I never mean to return to England ! England is *not* my native place. Go back to my native land ! I *am* in my native land : — this spot, insulated and obscure as it is, is the place

of my birth. This is the air I first breathed, the soil I first trod ; these are the accents I first heard, I first spoke : here I was born, and here I will die.

In the last lingering pangs of a consumption, my mother, as you must have heard, was brought from Madeira to this island, this air being considered still more favourable to the nature of her disease. In the very house I now occupy, nay, in the very room I now write, she gave birth to me, and died in the arms of my father. Too feeble and weak to be removed to England, when he returned home with the remains of his wife, he left me in the care of my nurse and her husband, hardy and robust mountaineers ; and such was the improvement in my growth and health, and the excessive fondness of my youthful foster-parents, that he consented to my remaining with them until I had attained my sixth year.

Thus did this sun, this firmament, this soil, become individually my own ; and thus, instead of being surrounded by strangers and foreigners, as you remark, I feel at home, and every stranger appears

a friend. All things around me assert their claim to my affection ; and to bind me still stronger to this dear place of my nativity, at the very moment I now write, being unusually weak and low-spirited, I am attended by a Spanish woman, the kindest, most disinterested being on earth, and to whom I was indebted in a great measure, on my arrival, (for Dr. H—— sought and found her,) for the recovery of my health and reason.

Clonmore, Martella, the nurse of my infancy, (now a widow,) at whose breast I was nourished for so many months, and by whose tender care I am in a great measure indebted for my recent recovery, is now at my side, entreating me, with all the fondness of a mother, to lay by my pen, and take the sago she has prepared for me.

This simple, untaught Spaniard, with her good-humoured happy face, unremitting attention, and love of anecdote respecting my deceased mother, and my own childhood, has been the means, under heaven, of restoring me to what I am, not a cheerful, but a resigned being.

Talk no more, then, to me, of England. There, it is true, I spent the delightful morning of boyhood, and enjoyed the meridian sun of youth and maturity; but there, also, came on that fatal eclipse, even when happiness was in the zenith. There I suffered the bitterest anguish of spirit, and lost, what my own death only can restore.

When my dear friend invites me, with such apparent ease, to return, and resume the functions of landlord, magistrate, and senator, how little is he aware of the change I have passed through; and how incredulous would he look, were I to assure him, that did he meet me, unprepared, in any strange place, he would pass me by, as one unknown to him.

I am now sitting to an eminent Spanish painter, who is on a visit at Mr. Balfour's, for my picture. Yes, Clonmore, for a full length picture, and as large as life!

“No flattery,” I said to the artist; “examine every wrinkle in my cheek; take notice of these furrows in my brow; observe the white shade in my temples. Copy faithfully the dull and sunken eye,

the mournful turn of the lip, the deep contraction of the forehead, the pale and unhealthy colour of the skin, the thin and nerveless hand, omit nothing of all this ; varnish not the slightest defect, but paint my blighted youth, my wasted form, to the very life.

“ You must represent me,” I continued, “ in this my usual morning dress ; here, in my private study, and seated in this old-fashioned high-backed chair. (The furniture of the house remains in the same state as when my mother died, now nine-and-twenty years.) Examine well the minutest decorations of this room : let every article, which can with propriety be admitted into a picture, resemble strictly the original, — the colour and disposal of the drapery, of the hangings, of the curtains, — let all be exact ; and when you have represented me thus by my English *Rumford fire-side*, you must paint the companion of my solitude, Carlo, my Newfoundland dog, lying on the mat at my feet, as you see him at this moment ! ”

The painter, with a mournful smile,

which I could have dispensed with, promised to comply, by attending most strictly to my directions. — The picture, when finished, shall be sent to England, to Oakland Park, there to hang in Claudio's room. I wish it to be the first object her eyes meet with when she wakes, and the last before she retires to rest. Thus will she become gradually familiarized to my appearance, so that when I send for her to come to me, (nay, no amazement, Clonmore, such is my intention,) she will not be shocked or affrighted at the living skeleton that shall hold out its arms to receive her — she will not shun and fly from me as from a monster: but having been taught, for upwards of a year, to call a painted figure, resembling me (and there is no hope of a more favourable change) her father, when we *do* meet, it will not be as strangers.

You now understand me perfectly, Clonmore, and I trust you to communicate my feelings and determination to my sisters, who, if they have still any value for my future happiness, will, instead of persevering, like yourself, in fruitless at-

tempts to induce my return, enter fully into them, and endeavour to serve me as alone I wish to be served.

I am building, Clonmore! — My good friend, I have long since been convinced, that the radical cure for a wounded spirit is employment. I have, in consequence, for many months, been engaged in that species of active occupation, which, more than any other, has the power of engrossing and interesting the mind, — building and gardening.

My resolution once formed, the land was soon purchased, and the foundations of the house laid. I made a model of the latter with my own hands ; and not only designed the arrangements of the grounds and vineyards, but superintended the workmen, and personally assisted in their labours.

I am confident, my friend, that whilst you decidedly approve of this experiment to lessen the repinings of the soul, and strengthen the body by manual toil, you will feel astonished at my possessing that

degree of fortitude necessary to lead me to form it. The idea, Clonmore, did not originate with me : I adopted it at the suggestion of a Spanish friend of Mr. Balfour, at whose house at Santa Cruz, and villa at Ben Lomond, as he calls it, we often meet.

This Don Zulvago was at first the object of my suspicion, and soon became that of my horror and aversion. I fancied he was a spy upon my actions ; and having, soon after my arrival here, found him at different periods close behind me, when I fancied myself in total solitude, I have been often tempted to insult him, and call him to an account for his singular conduct. On such occasions he bore my peevishness and violent remonstrances with the most perfect good-humour, merely turning from me with a shrug of the shoulders, whilst whistling the burden of a Spanish song.

I have since recollected that I was subject at that time to a giddiness in my head, and more than once, in my lonely rambles, must have fallen into the sea, or over a precipice, but for the vigilance,

strength, and activity of this constant, and unless required, invisible attendant. — He never spoke, never answered me, but to all my questions as to his insolent officiousness, invariably turned upon his heel with a whistle.

I had sense enough, however, to observe, that as my health grew confirmed, he became more sparing of his company ; and to my great relief, I had not been on the island more than four months, when he discontinued his attendance altogether.

Anxious to make some compensation to Balfour, my mercantile friend, I one day, when we were alone, put a small pocket-book into his hand, with grateful expressions of my sense of the skill and humanity with which he had treated me, (for, as I have already mentioned, he formerly made medicine his study,) when he, conscious that he had fulfilled his promises to Dr. H——, with the utmost frankness and good-humour accepted the gift as a token of gratitude from a rich man to one, but lately married, who might have a family, and whose depend-

ance rested on the exercise of his various talents.

I then threw upon the table a purse of dollars and other coin, adding carelessly, “ Give that to your spy : he has done his duty ; but never let me see his face again.”

“ My spy !” exclaimed Balfour, with astonishment.

“ Yes, that fellow with the strong arm — you know who I mean : in short, my dear sir, as I am now well enough to acknowledge my past insanity, do you be equally candid, and own yourself satisfied with that able-bodied Spaniard whom you appointed my keeper, and give him this his reward from me.”

Balfour perfectly stared with surprise, and then added, “ You cannot mean Don Zulvago, whom you have met so frequently at my table.”

“ The same — the man in black ; — as for the *Don*, that title here, I find, is on a par with *Esquire* in England. — And as for his dining in your company, that I look upon as the hospitable sort of equality which I so much admire in the

place ; but I made one observation on your guest, if you choose thus to denominate him, neither at meals, or other time, did I ever hear any sound from his lips but a sort of whistle."

" In the first place, pocket your dollars, and then tell me, do you not, Sir Eliot, consider yourself a rich man — of course that is understood, you are such. Well, then, the fact is, this Zulvago possesses, perhaps, triple your wealth, as on enquiry you would be informed at the banks of London, Paris, Vienna, and Amsterdam. — Since the title of *Don* displeases you as common and unrestricted, perhaps that of Conde d'Almeida may please you better ; and, not to mention half a score Christian names which distinguish him according to the Spanish custom, let me add, he is one of the most illustrious members of the Cortes of Spain, and has held a high commission in the Spanish army."

" Can it be possible ! — but then his manners, his habits of life — even his dress, his equipage, — or rather his no equipage — ”

“ Granted, but such is his pleasure. — He is verging towards the age of five-and-thirty, and still unmarried ; true, but that is equally his own concern. — He is a native of Madrid, and yet a naturalized citizen of almost every civilized capital in Europe. — He has been in every quarter of the globe, has spent some years in India and America, and is not only master of the dead languages, but speaks and writes most of the modern.”

“ Not English, assuredly !” — (and I felt myself redder at past recollections.) “ Pardon me — he does, and if you will take the trouble to unbend and meet him half way, you will find him as great a proficient in our language as Baretti himself, whose travels I see you are now reading. You will meet in Zulvago the rational companion, but no entertaining traveller, as his reserve is at times invincible. However, to recommend him further to your acquaintance, I must dwell on the care and attention he has for some months shown to you ; when I felt uneasy at your absence, and yet was unable to disengage myself from business to at-

tend you in your rambles, three words from Zulvago have set my mind at ease for the remainder of the day — “Rely on me,” was his usual expression, and I have then felt as secure as if I had had you buckled to my side.”

“But what motive — what inducement?”

“Simply philanthropy,” replied Balfour, “therefore consider yourself under no peculiar obligation to this gentleman — he lives to do good — he not only seizes every occasion that presents itself, but seeks for opportunities, and is equally ready to assist the helpless and afflicted negro, as the wealthy English baronet; neither sex, age, condition, colour or religion have any distinctions with him, his ready hand is held out to all: — it is a hand equally ready to relieve, to comfort, and to save, as to punish and defend.”

At this instant, Clonmore, the door opened, and the object of our conversation walked into the room, or rather sauntered carelessly forward; one hand replaced again in his pocket, the other holding on high a bunch of grapes, which

he was eating in the manner of a boy playing bob-cherry.

I rose hastily, and extending my hand, thanked him cordially for the benevolent attentions he had shown me during my malady, and dwelt particularly on the gentlemanly forbearance he had at all times manifested, even when my suspicious petulance warranted very different treatment.

He received my thanks and apologies with a singular degree of ease and readiness, thereby acknowledging them his due; and as we then entered on topics of a general nature, (he speaking our language fluently, though with a foreign accent,) Balfour, after shaking us both heartily by the hand in the true English fashion, and congratulating us on this first introduction to each other after a four months' acquaintance, left the room.

From that period not a day has passed that Don Zulvago and I have not met, either in our walks or rides, or at the dinner and evening parties to which we are invited by the different consuls and other hospitable neighbours of different

nations residing in various parts of the island.

One subject alone seems, as if by mutual consent, to be excluded our intercourse, — that of marriage: indeed we seldom speak of women at all. Of course he has been made acquainted with my misfortune, and avoids the slightest reference to it, and yet I sometimes imagine his aversion to this topic is less to spare my feelings than his own.

Though only five or six years older than myself, I feel the attempt to penetrate his secret impossible; but that there is a secret, and one of a disastrous nature that fills his heart, I am thoroughly convinced. With all due respect to his philanthropy, I am almost persuaded, that sympathy had the greatest share in leading him to watch me with such unremitting attention.

He is a worthy man, I allow; but like myself has certainly been crossed in the plain road of life, and forced into a thorny path as contrary to his expectations as wishes, and this has been the foundation of so extraordinary a character.—

Grief and disappointment have left their marks upon him, not so much upon his person, as upon his manners altogether, which are undescribable ; to return your quotation by another — “ *Mæstitia cor quasi percussum constringitur, tremit et languescit, cum acri sensa doloris.*” *

This Zulvago has outlived the effect of some sudden and dire convulsion of the heart, and is now master of its movements : — he betrays no emotion, no sensibility, no warmth of attachment to any one object ; and yet I am persuaded there is still a chord existing in that heart, which touched by the hand of a master, or of chance, would vibrate with intense passion.

But to return to the subject of my new occupation : — about two months since we rode together in my calash to Laguna, when oppressed with heat and thirst we stopped at the cottage of a water and ice carrier, and refreshed ourselves with what the inhabitants eagerly placed before us. Whilst our beasts

* Melancthon.

rested in the shade, he and I walked round the cottage to observe our hosts young and old, at their various labours.

The master of the family fixed my attention: — he was at work upon a low wide shed constructed of rude logs of wood, the interstices filled with blocks of lava, and the roof thatched with dried vine stalks. — To this habitation, designed for his mules, he was now making a door, — his cheerfulness, his industry, ingenuity and patience, for the trade of a carpenter seemed new to him, excited at once my admiration and envy.

“ Here,” observed I to Zulvago, “ here, though surrounded by poverty, is a truly happy mortal, for he has some employment: I wish I could build a mule house, and attempt to construct a door to fit it. I should unquestionably be a more useful man, and perhaps a happier, than I am at present.”

“ What occasion to build a *mule* house or perplex yourself whether a door will or will not fit; — build at once a mansion house, and I will engage, as you say in Ireland (for I have been in that island),

that the grass will never grow before *your door*."

Upon this slight hint, which immediately filled me with hope, as offering a resource for the future, I laid all my plans; and profiting by his superior knowledge of the country, and its inhabitants, I became the purchaser of a tract of land a few miles from the city of Orotava, which for local beauties has not its equal in the island. From Balfour's perfect acquaintance with the customs of the place, I left him the task of engaging workmen, and artificers; and our daily progress is such, that in less than a twelvemonth I shall be in possession of an earthly Paradise. A Paradise! yes; an Adam without an Eve.

All this would indeed be superfluous folly, had I not a child. Or rather, nothing merely to benefit self, could have roused me to this exertion; but, when I think of my little Claudy, and how soon the infant expands into the child, the child becomes a girl, the girl a woman!— Oh, Clonmore, if the Almighty but spares my life to rear my daughter to

maturity, to see her blessed and blessing in wedlock, (as I was once blessed,) to behold her children round me, then, in peace, I may lay down my widowed head, on the pillow of death, and resign the world without one pang.

I think, after this letter, my sisters, and you, will have the rationality to give up all serious expectations of my return to England. Write to me, and say you are satisfied: promise me that the picture mentioned above, and which you will soon receive, will be disposed of in the manner I wish; and, finally, assure me you are reconciled to the idea, that in a year from this time, the period allotted for the completion of my future residence, Claudy must be brought to me.— It is even so, Clonmore, and you are the person who must bring her! I speak decisively; such is the language of friendship. I would do thus by you, and you know I would.— If you comply, we meet again: if not, we meet no more in this world.

Present my kindest wishes to Mrs. Clonmore; and when you write again,

pray be particular concerning your little Dudley, (the dear god-son of my Claudiina !) He seems, poor fellow, to have had rather more than his share of suffering in this world ; and yet, as I hear from Dr. H—, he bears his afflictions with patience and docility. Poor infant ! And acquaint me how your French pupil, St. Eloi, goes on. As to politics, and your new war, my dear friend, I have only to ascend a few miles towards the Peak, to feel as if all the convulsive struggles for empire, among mankind, were little more than the quarrels of emmets for a grain of corn on an ant hill.

Ever sincerely your's,

ELIOT HOWARD.

LETTER X.

The Countess of Alford to Sir Eliot Howard.

Oakland Park.

I DID not answer your letter, my dear brother, because I really did hope, that on the receipt of Clonmore's, you would have called for your barge, and merry men all, and ferried over the water from Teneriffe to our Dorsetshire cliffs.

About three days before the time when we might reasonably expect you, that is, by the last homeward-bound ships, I crammed the Parson, sister Jane, little Claudy, and myself into my travelling carriage, and set off in a whirl of dust from London to Oakland Park ; — there were we deposited, whilst our reverend gentleman struck off eastward, ho ! for Portsmouth, to meet you !

Daily, at the hazard of my neck, did I fix myself on the look-out with my

opera-glass, watching every sail from the south ; and once, mistaking a flock of gulls for a fleet, narrowly escaped the fate of Sappho, (without her fame,) by tumbling over the cliffs into a raging ocean ; whilst steady old Jane went on, as usual, with her morning avocations, beginning with that intolerable one of teaching your mighty heiress her A, B, C.

Upon my life, Eliot, after all, you have played us a shabby trick. Now, suppose sister Jenny, and I, a couple of as bonny widows as ever wore weepers, had followed your example, where might our station be at present ? — Why did not Jane, on losing *her* mate, expand her raven pinion towards Nova Zembla ? And why did not I, when become a widow, flutter my butterfly wing, and fly to Otaheite ? — Thus, north, south, and west, we should have stood three disconsolates, playing at fool in the middle. No, no ; we know better. Widow Grantley would marry to-morrow, if she could get a man in the mind ; and I the next day, could I find a man *to* my mind. Ever, Eliot, copy a good example ; and,

a word to the wise, no object on earth more interesting, in the eyes of a girl of fashion, than a handsome widower under thirty, whose Christian name is preceded by a Sir, and in whose rent-roll, the first figure is followed by a couple of brace of cyphers.

Clonmore has shown us your letters to him ; and, by the last received, we are to understand, that England and its Parliament, Oakland Park and its dependencies, your old school-fellow, and his rising family, your prudent elder sister, your angelic younger, and, to sum up all, your vixen child, are renounced for ever. Oh no ! I forgot, the little vixen is to be transported to Teneriffe, and, in exchange, we are to receive the picture of a handsome skeleton, in a blue damask gown, green slippers, and red velvet cap, with an enormous dog at his feet, roasting itself before a great fire.

Well, this is a comical present to Claudy ! And you wish her to fall in love with this same portrait of a yellow-boned old gentleman, beautifully grey, with well-favoured wrinkles, becoming

furrows, and languishing hollow eyes. If she does, it will be an act of obedience you never could obtain from me.

Apropos of love, Eliot. — Do you know, I am singularly bewitched with your character of the whistling Spaniard, Don Zulvago del ——, (stay, I must look back at your letter to Clonmore, that I may spell the Castilian's name with propriety, or I may mar my future fortunes,) D'Almeida —— Don Zulvago, Conde D'Almeida! As fine a name as ever flourished in a romance. — The idea of a whistling Don was to me so truly ridiculous, that, at that part of your correspondence, I own I laughed heartily. Why, “as grave as a Spaniard,” was a favourite proverb of mine; and must I give that up, and substitute the risible one of “as merry as a Spaniard!” But, let me ask you, does this Spanish Earl whistle from “*want of thought*,” as Cymon did of old, or from too much thought? The latter we may conclude, as, from certain particulars best known to yourself, you infer that he has been in love.

He is five years turned of thirty, you say ; that's a pity. And he positively has been once in love : so much the better ; the more likely to fall in love again. Is he tall or short, fat or lean, orange or lemon coloured ? What business had he in Ireland ? Has he ever been in England ? Dō, Eliot, persuade him what a pretty trip it would be for him, to come and fetch Claudy, if go she must, but I think she is at present in better hands, than ever she can be in your's.

What, in the name of righteousness, Eliot, will you be able to do with a baby of four years old ? Give her in charge of your old Spanish nurse, to cram her head full of fandangos, sequidillas, and love for little boys, or a love of celibacy and nunneries ? No, no, Baronet, Claudy is safe with us, and here leave her. Women alone can, and ought to educate girls, especially if they are intended for wives, for I scarcely ever yet heard of a daughter, brought up by a learned father, who did not wither into “ single blessedness.”

I allow that Claudio, although my god-daughter, as well as niece, is by nature a beautiful tyrant, a passionate elf, a termagant, a scold ; and that she does require the authority of papa, to say “ Bo !” and frighten her into passive obedience and non-resistance ; yet I cannot part with her ; I cannot indeed. So make yourself perfectly easy on that head. You may think, perhaps, that I have treated her with severity : on the contrary, Eliot, I give you my word, I have never yet contradicted or punished her, even with an angry frown ; yet the ungrateful young rebel no more minds me, than does my lap-dog, little Bloom, who bites my fingers whilst I feed him. Yet there is sister Jane, sitting as upright in her chair, (without elbows,) and looking on a sofa, or a b^ergere, with as much abhorrence as ever, governs Claudio by a monosyllable, a glance of the eye, a nod of her stately head, or the tip of her forefinger. — In short, with sister Grantley, your hopeful heiress is as meek as a hungry robin, with me as sturdy as a wild sparrow.

And so, my good brother, you are building a palace in the African islands, planting groves of limes and oranges, sinking fishponds, grafting mulberry trees, trafficking in malmsey wine, visiting the sepulchral caves of the Guanches, and watching the smoke issue from the great tobacco-pipe of Teneriffe. — Well, these are pretty amusements for an English parliament-man, a Dorsetshire squire, and a bit of a justice of the peace.

Would not your mind have been equally diverted from family misfortunes, had you, like a good boy, staid at home, to whip your child, scold your servants, interfere in your neighbours' quarrels, pocket your tenants' rent, and go to sleep in St. Stephen's Chapel? — No; instead of pursuing these manly and rational avocations, you must, forsooth, (a word just in fashion with me,) — you must go house-building, and garden-planning, in Teneriffe. The deuce fly away with Teneriffe, I say. — I remember, when you were a school-boy, and I more than usually saucy, you used to threaten me with running off to Teneriffe. As to the

present excuse, of your having been born there, begging your pardon, Eliot, that is all nonsense. Your ancestors, your parents, your sisters, your wife, your child, your friends, were, and are English born ; and the accidental circumstance of your mother's confinement in that island, scarcely renders you less a native of Britain.

I have not patience with you, Eliot, 'pon my life I have not. I did certainly like an ideot shed a few tears over that first letter of your's to me, just out of decorum ; perhaps I kissed it too, with more pleasure than ever I saluted a love letter from my late lord, even during courtship ; but I was then under the full idea that your absence was temporary, that you would soon return — the slightest suspicion of the contrary, and I had immediately put it to the charming purpose of curling Bloom's whiskers.

The picture is come ! the painted skeleton is arrived ! and now for a description of the magical effects produced

by the first sight upon the several personages assembled to examine it.

It was landed at Plymouth, and we received it this morning. On being taken out of its packing case, or rather coffin, I desired it to be carried up to the picture gallery, where it was set upright on the floor against the wall, until I could have it removed into Claudio's room.

Dr. H —, who has been spending a week with us, was present. He stood looking at it some time in silence, drawing in his lips, and tap, tap, tapping the lid of his snuff-box, then filling his nostrils with a mighty pinch, and to my great horror scattering the remainder on the floor : he turned round full upon us, saying, “Don Quixote and Sir Launcelot Greaves were fools to this fellow,” meaning you, my wise brother.

Poor Clonmore looked at it till he could look no longer ; his soft, silly heart was too full to speak ; whilst Jane, as she composedly drew forward a chair, and sat down before it, quietly remarked, with a coldness, for which I could willingly have taken her by the two ears,

and shaken her out of her shoes, “ If this really resembles my brother, he is very much changed.”

And what was I about all this time ? Storming, raving, calling for a pound brush of red ochre to splash about the deadly cheeks and lips ; or for my scissors, to cut the horrible ghastly face out of the canvas altogether.

In the name of all that is hideous, Eliot, what made you try to amuse us by sending a present of such a spectre ? as to its being a resemblance, I will not think it possible. — *You* to be reduced to this shadow ! to be really this meagre, sickly, withered, melancholy thing ! and if a likeness, let me enquire, why should you be hundreds of leagues distant from us ? — unkind, ungenerous man ! Write but one word to convince me you are as near the grave as this portrait represents you, and I will no longer urge your return to us, but I will come to you.

I cannot, I will not believe you are in this state, particularly as Dr. H—— has by the same ship received most favourable accounts from Mr. Balfour.— If such

is your appearance on recovery, what must you have suffered! — poor Eliot! —

To return to the picture. — Whilst we were engaged remarking on it, Claudio made her appearance ; — at first she imagined it was one taken down from its place ; but after galloping (she never walks) from one end of the gallery to the other, and finding none were missing, she stood still immediately in front to look at it.

From looking, she proceeded to feeling, and as she is very fond of dogs, (your taste,) she spread both her hands on the head of Carlo, and looked up in your face, (you understand me.) Her attitude was striking ; to us, at the distance we stood, she appeared standing at your knee, as you sat in your morning gown by the fire in your great arm chair.

Neither the doctor or the parson broke silence ; and as Jane did not seem inclined to make a second observation of any kind, I got tired of this dumb show, and asked Claudio whose picture was that.

“ Don’t know.”

“ Don’t you think it very ugly ?

“ No, very pretty :”—(just out of contradiction to me.) But whether she meant you or the dog was still doubtful.

“ Will you kiss it ?” enquired Clonmore, lifting her in his arms to your face.

To this she made not the smallest objection, and having touched the death-looking mouth with her rosy lips —(I protest more than I could have done)—she struggled to be placed again on the floor, saying, “ Must kiss dog too.”

“ Claudy, come here,” said Jane, drawing her to her knee, and pointing up to your frightful phiz : “ that is papa, your own dear papa, whom you talk of every day, and wish so much to see.”

The little girl paused some time, and then turning briskly from the picture to her aunt, said, (you know, Eliot, you have charged us to be particular and unre-served in our communications where Claudy is concerned,) looking anxiously up in Jane’s face, she cried, “ And where mamma ?”

I should have avoided a direct answer ;

but sister Grantley, who never acts like any one else, replied at once : —

“ I have often told you, Claudy, that mamma is dead, that she no longer lives with us on earth ; but lives with God in Heaven ; — you will never see her again, but when you die you will go to her.”

With as much eagerness as if the question related to a journey and a coach at the door to carry her to mamma, the little creature in a pretty coaxing manner said to Jane, “ And tell me, aunt, when *shall* I die.”

“ When God pleases to call you away,” answered our orthodox sister, with as much formal gravity as if she were speaking to a girl of eleven ; and then pointing again to the picture, she added, “ But your papa is alive, and you perhaps will see him again, and love him, and play with him, and make him happy — do you not wish to see dear papa, Claudy ?”

“ Yes,” replied your heiress, “ and dog too.”

Thus you see the picture of Carlo has awakened as much interest in the bosom of Claudy as that of yourself, nay ; I

think her salute to him was more voluntary and fervent than the one to you ; she patted his head, held her hand to his mouth to be licked, and at last, to the great amusement of Dr. H—, who burst into one of his barbarous roaring laughs, she ran from the picture, and, still looking back, called to the dog to follow her.

This produced a ridiculous pedantic explanation from Jane between the substance and the shade, which she fully expected a child of three years old to understand. Heaven help her sagacity !

Tired of you, and them, and the whole display, I at last hastily drew the silk curtain before the picture, left the gallery, called to Herbert, and ordered it to its future quarters, Claudy's nursery ; where, in obedience to your worship's commands, it will be hoisted and suspended, for evermore ; that her darling little eyes may feast upon it day and night ; a sort of repast I certainly do not envy her.

From that period we have been hourly tormented with one constant repetition of “Where papa? where dear papa? when papa come home? when Claudy go to papa?” In short nothing is heard throughout the house but “Papa! papa! papa!” and she is already as familiar with your death’s-head portrait, as with that of Mother Goose.

Every soul in the house, the gardens, and the stables, has been dragged by her little ladyship into the nursery, to see the “*beauty-picture*,” as she calls it; nay, at first, she insisted on all her visitors saluting it, which nurse Morton and butler Herbert, like a couple of old numbskulls, actually did; and I really believe, had we not put a stop to her frolics, the numerous spectators would in time have saluted away every lovely furrow, and enchanting wrinkle.

How I wish that Claudy’s pretty lips could efface them from the original! — fie! fie! on the word of a peeress, I am getting sentimental, and sentiment is not just now one of the fashions of *our* island, whatever it may be in *your*’s.

Well, dear brother, have I been particular enough in my accounts of your brat? — if you are not heartily tired of the subject, I am, and must now say good bye — or in the good old fashioned spelling of the word — God be with you.

As to arguing with you any more on giving up this absurd whim of living and dying a sociable Robinson Crusoe on your semi-barbarian island, that I leave to the abler pen of Clonmore — and depending on him alone, for my obstinate old beau Dr. H—— declares and vows (you may substitute a bolder word if you choose) that you are to judge for yourself; and Jane reminds me of her dislike to letter writing; I do not yet despair of your eating your next Christmas turkey at Oakland Park, in the company of the aforesaid individuals, and in that of your still affectionate, and ever blooming sister,

CAROLINE ALFORD.

LETTER XI.

Sir Eliot Howard to the Rev. Henry Clonmore.

Teneriffe.

EIGHT months are passed since I last wrote to England, and now I have to inform my dear Clonmore, that, thanks to Don Zulvago's and Mr. Balfour's exertions, my house is finished, and my plantations are thriving — that my health is greatly amended, and my mind at peace.

Why still persist in urging me by repeated letters* to a compliance with wishes that would be death to me? — I cannot my friend even agree to the terms proposed in your last, of paying a short visit to England: it is my fixed and unalterable resolution here to remain; and I repeat, that unless we meet in Teneriffe, we meet no more.

* Which do not appear.

The only letter I received from my sister Caroline caused me much uneasiness. Either my taste and feelings are wholly embittered by my late misfortunes and recent malady, or she is no longer the same: she was ever giddy and thoughtless, I allow, and is still very young, yet such great insensibility to my sufferings, such ill-timed frivolity of language, such carelessness of expression, (a few tender passages excepted,) I was not prepared for, and can only assure you, that had I seen this specimen of her present turn of mind before I sent her the melancholy narrative of my loss and departure from England, she had never received it; — as it is, I charge you not to show her any more of my letters to yourself; she has lost my confidence, and can no longer be the depository of the sighings of a broken heart.

I should prefer the rough manliness of Dr. H——'s nature, or the wearisome perseverance of your's, or the frozen apathy of my sister Jane's, however hostile to my inclinations, to those of a fine lady; and such, with surprise and con-

cern, I am convinced Caroline is become.

As I observed before, from her very cradle she was of a volatile and capricious turn, though possessing a sweet and engaging temper: no one knows this better than Mrs. Clonmore, her earliest friend: — and Caroline, had a heart also, as was often proved during her husband's lifetime, to whose inclinations her own ever gave way — but since his death, she appears to have entered so completely on the full career of fashion and folly, under the auspices of the Dowager Countess of Alford, that the very affections of her nature seem perverted; or, what is still worse, her real character is perhaps disguised beneath the flippant veil of levity and affectation: — from whatever cause, I am persuaded her character is changed; and under this impression, I repeat, my confidence in her is gone.

How truly singular and happy, that the same letter which exhibited to me the capricious Countess in so unpleasant a light, should serve to show Mrs. Grantley, in the most pleasing point of view

Caroline at that hour (the scene in the gallery) held a dark lanthorn to her sister, herself obscured in shade, whilst throwing the full and perfect light on Jane, by which I discerned a variety of excellence in the latter, that, though I had ever a high opinion of her sense and prudence, I really knew not from the apparent coldness of her character, she possessed.

Oh, Clonmore, should my fond hopes be realised, the remainder of my life will indeed be smoothed, and its close rendered far more cheering than I ever dared expect.

Fully to understand the motives on which I act, you must first be aware, my friend, that though you and I are of the same standing in life, Claudy will be my heiress, — no second marriage shall ever authorise a doubt upon the subject ; and thus, be my life short or protracted, my daughter will remain my only child. Should it, however, please God to deprive me of her, I do not assert that my mind may or may not then conform to circumstances ; but in all human pro-

bability, if we may judge from her present excellent stamina, she will live to close my eyes, even though I should be doomed to a long existence.

This point settled and understood, the next is easily foreseen; in about three months Claudio shall be brought hither, and thenceforward she and I never separate.—I hear all your objections, I anticipate all your doubts; but I am resolved, and nothing now remains than to put my long-arranged plans into execution.—Once beneath my roof and protection, she quits them no more until she removes to those of a husband; and notwithstanding Lady Alford's lively remarks on motherless daughters and learned fathers, I should be truly sorry were Claudio to pass even her twenty-third year, and not have come to a resolution of giving me a son-in-law.

To this plan of mine you will object as impracticable; you will assert, and with truth, that a girl must be reared under female tuition; and with equal discrimination observe, that at my time of life the idea of domesticating a young woman

with me for that purpose is entirely out of the question ; and young the person selected to bring up Claudio must be, or she would not be equal to the charge, or able to encounter the turbulent spirits of childhood. In figure and face, she must at least be pleasing, in manners elegant, in conversation refined and polished :— joined to the usual qualifications known by the name of accomplishments, she must, for her pupil's sake, possess evenness of temper, patience, mildness, piety ; in short, more virtues and excellencies than usually fall to the lot of one woman ; for I am convinced, to my everlasting regret, that there was but one Claudina on earth.

Were we to engage a young person such as I have described, to undertake the charge of my child, what could prevent me, from pity and compassionate deference to her helpless and dependent state—(which is ever the result of extreme indigence, for who, that could command shelter, food, and clothing, even of the humblest quality, would dwell beneath the roof a stranger)— what could hinder

my showing her those common attentions, nay, that respect due from man to woman, no matter the inequality of their rank in life ; and though I could answer for my own disinterested intentions, and the invulnerable state of my own widowed heart, what I repeat (forgive my vanity) might prevent a young girl of eighteen or so being inspired with gratitude much too tender.

These considerations offer an insuperable objection to the governess' plan ; neither is it possible for Claudy to remain, when here, under the sole female guidance of Nurse Morton, at least after her fifth year ; and I really have not the intention with which Caroline reproaches me, of consigning her to the care of my own old Spanish nurse Martella.

And now, Clonmore, at once to the point. — Do you think it likely that Mrs. Grantley could be prevailed upon to spend with me a few years of Claudy's childhood. You have seen her since the loss of her husband and her children ; Jane and I have not met for some years ; you are, therefore, a better judge than I can

be of what success might attend a proposal of this nature: it however must be made, and by yourself, and without delay.

The early deprivation of her family may lead her to wish for a retreat from the world, through which having travelled upwards of forty years, few temptations or enjoyments now remain.— Should she, however, have it in contemplation to marry again, (which I think unlikely,) I am so well convinced that her choice, both in respect to age and character, will be suitable and judicious, that my wishes must not in that case be even whispered: in short, Clonmore, I leave you to settle this very delicate business in your usual adroit manner; and be assured I shall feel satisfied, whatever may be the result. Concluding that no other motive would induce her to reject my offer, I shall only then endeavour to reconcile myself to the disappointment by rejoicing in the prospect of the happiness she may enjoy in a second union.

I know her disposition so well, that I

shall instantly prepare for her coming, should she answer you (though with the most seeming indifference), "Yes, by all means;" aware, that had she the slightest objection to the voyage, she would reply in the same tone of voice, "No, by no means."

Caroline, on the contrary, could she be induced, even by the love of novelty, to accept my invitation, (under the mere idea of a visit, for education with her is out of the question,) would in less than two days be looking out for a homeward bound sail to carry her back again, although she might have protested before her arrival, to live and die with me in my beautiful island.

From having married at seventeen, and associated almost exclusively with her husband's friends, who were of the gayest class, (not excepting his mother, the present dowager,) Caroline's education was never finished, (at least in my opinion, and in that of Jane, to whose care she was left upon the death of her mother,) though according to her own assertions, it was complete at fifteen, for at that age she

excelled every competitor in singing, music, and dancing. — From not having had any family, her domestic virtues have never been called forth ; and Lord Alford's death, occasioned by a fall from his horse in hunting, when he was killed on the spot, gave his wife no opportunity of being initiated, by any previous illness or suffering on his part, into the duties of a sick chamber, or the various acts of self-denial attendant on such a situation. She has, therefore, to use her own words, really led a sort of butterfly life, and now knows little more of care than the name : — may she never know more !

How widely different has been the lot of her sister : for many years the nurse of an infirm, yet ever beloved husband, she scarcely crossed the threshold of her house. When she became a mother, her laborious duties multiplied, whilst she shrunk not from even the most painful : three infants died in a short space of time in her arms ; two were spared to her, a girl and a boy ; the education of these

she superintended herself, and looked forward to rear them to maturity: they, as you may have heard, reached their tenth and eleventh years, and then expired within a few days of each other.

— The particulars of their death I never heard: all I know is, that Grantley, blessing her with his last breath, bade her be comforted, for though the event had proved otherwise, she had acted for the best; which implies some secret understanding between themselves, and which Grantley's medical attendant at Copenhagen, as he informed Dr. H—, could not himself comprehend, for apparently a fonder mother was no where to be found. — By his death she is now left alone in the world, deprived, it is true, of much anxiety and labour, but at the same time of all that she could call happiness.

Under these circumstances, I was long since informed by Dr. H—, Mrs. Grantley consented, on her return from abroad, to live for a short time with her sister, during which visit she has contracted an

affection for her little niece, my poor forsaken Claudy, and that the child, on her part, has become greatly attached to her elder aunt. On this foundation are my hopes of future happiness raised: see you to it, Clonmore. You now comprehend my views, and have only to realise them, without delay.

Your next letter will decide me as to the course I have to pursue. On your bringing Claudy to me yourself, the continuance of our friendship depends; consequently, on this head, I entertain no doubt: my only apprehensions rest on Mrs. Grantley's willingness to accompany you. — I should wish that Nurse Morton, and my own man, Forbes, and Robert, should make part of your suite, unless they object, in the slightest degree, to the voyage, of which you will inform me in time, that I may name others to fill their posts.

The enclosed drafts on Puget and Bainbridge, Warwick-lane, and a list of what I wish to form part of the freightage of the vessel that conveys you hither, will

convince you, Clonmore, that all you have now to do, is to obey the dictates of friendship.

Ever your's,

ELIOT HOWARD.

LETTER XII.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to Sir Eliot Howard.

Bloomfield Rectory.

EVEN your awful threat, that the continuance of our friendship was at stake, did I not comply with your wishes, might have failed, had they not met with a powerful auxiliary in Dr. H—, whom, as I told him, I charitably think you have secretly bribed into your service on this occasion; but the whim of his raving at me for a consequential blockhead, in hesitating a moment on your proposal, was what most diverted me, as if sailing to Teneriffe was little more than rowing to Kew.

“What, on earth, are you afraid of?” he vociferated.

“Nothing, on *earth*, Doctor,” I replied, laughing.

“Well then, on the *seas*, you grinning

whelp you? Would not one think you expected mutinies and water-spouts, whales, shipwrecks, icebergs, and krakens, that you make as much bother about a fourteen days' pleasant sail, as if you were invited out to the North Pole. One would imagine the fellow was at Java instead of Teneriffe, here close at hand. Half the time spent in saying, "Louisa, my wife, shall I go, or shall I not go?" would have taken you ten times there, and back again."

"Well, Doctor," I replied, rather piqued at his raillery, "as you seem to think no more of crossing the Bay of Biscay in time of war, and sailing to these Atlantic islands, than you would taking a trip to the Bay of Dublin, suppose you accompany me?"

"Why so I intend, you puppy, whether you invite me or not."

As I merely, in an ill-humour, hazarded this proposal, without the slightest knowledge of his purpose, you may suppose what relief and pleasure these words afforded.

"Oh, in that case," I observed, "the

affair is a settled thing ; and now to prepare for this stupendous enterprise."

Mrs. Grantley, to whom I had not as yet mentioned, even in the slightest manner, what were the nature of your hopes, was sitting near us, at work, during this conversation, and, at my last remark, was heard to utter a deep sigh. Rather astonished, I turned round, and, for a moment, stood to observe her attentively, without her perceiving me. She was netting a purse at the time, and I could remark, that the whole machinery, (from the utmost regular form of rank and file,) fell into total confusion, and at an instant, as if owing to an involuntary convulsion of the hands.

Soon after I heard her say, in a sort of low whisper, as if only designed for her own ear — " But I have not deserved so great a blessing." The words were wholly unintelligible both to Dr. H— and myself, yet they were not lost on either. We looked at each other ; he took out his snuff-box, and I, as I stood at the table, turned over the leaves of a

book, resolving to watch my occasion, and at once impart your wishes.

It was evident that some powerful emotion was struggling in the breast of your *cold and indifferent* Mrs. Grantley ; and in a few minutes, it was equally apparent, that she possessed sufficient self-command entirely to subdue it ; for with perfect calmness she observed, whilst restoring her work to order, “ I wish my brother had invited *me* to Teneriffe ; *I* should have gone, not only without hesitation, but with pleasure. Himself and child are to me now the dearest objects on earth ; and it was only this morning that I hoped Claudy might never be separated from me until she married.”

These words completed the business. You may suppose what followed ; but, well as you are acquainted with your sister’s temperament, I defy you to picture her (unless I assist your imagination,) rising calmly from her chair, replacing her netting in the box, closing the sliding lid, carefully picking up every end of silk and thread, and throwing them in the fire, and then silently leaving the room.

Depend upon it, you are right: her heart, though a plain casket, is the repository of invaluable gems: no one has the key of it but herself, and to none but to a bosom friend is it unlocked. It is evident, from the report of their most intimate acquaintance, that her husband knew her heart, and valued it accordingly.

We saw no more of Mrs. Grantley until we met in the drawing-room, a short time before dinner, when Lady Alford exclaimed, "Lord, Jane, you have got a sad cold in your eyes. Why, child, they are as red as my coral bracelets.—Doctor, why don't you feel her pulse?"

"Something better to do now, my Princess," he replied, offering Mrs. Grantley his arm, whilst Lady Alford took mine, "I am going now to feel the pulse of a boiled chicken."

The conversation at dinner was of a general nature, until the servants being withdrawn, we closed round the fire, (having no company,) when the subject of the voyage was at once entered upon,

and Lady Alford, for the first time, informed of your wishes, and our intentions.

No, Howard, it is entirely out of my power to describe the effect this news had upon the Countess. At first she seemed stunned, as if by a sudden and overwhelming blow: she then affected to discredit it altogether, and laughed at her own credulity; but when, on appealing to Mrs. Grantley, (for she would not listen to either the Doctor or myself,) she found it was but too true, she burst into a violent fit of half rage and half grief. — I, as the promoter of the scheme, was assailed by every whimsically abusive term she could invent, on hearing which it was as impossible not to smile as to feel pity. I was a stony-hearted Blue-beard, a savage Merry-Andrew, to laugh at her distress; a barbarous, two-faced, black-hooded monk, to deceive her thus; a great old credulous ourang-outang, to believe you sincere in your resolution of staying where you were; and, in short, she concluded with this benevolent wish, — “ May your ship be taken, and all of you crammed into an iron coop at Ro-

chelle, for this insidious and cruel behaviour to me."

Mrs. Grantley was next attacked, and the Teneriffe expedition represented in all its horrors. Shut up with a wild misanthrope, (whom, however, she dearly loved,) a squalling perverse brat, (who was an angel,) an old duenna, covered from head to foot with Spanish snuff, (your Martella, I suppose,) and half-a-score yellow-skinned servants, and not a soul with whom to exchange visits but Don this and Donna that, and Donzella the other ; — " the deuce take them all."

As for Balfour, he was a bowing Sawney, and Don Zulvago a Jesuit, without ceremony, who had set you on to build and plant in a foreign place, that he might enjoy house and land himself, after throwing you into the dungeons of the Inquisition.

This conceit pleased the fancy of Dr. H— to so violent a degree, that her ladyship next turned her vengeance on him, as the original cause of all this mischief, by tucking you under his arm, like

a bag of Cayenne pepper, as she said, and hoisting sail for Teneriffe.

“ One word more,” said the Doctor, after listening to her extravagance for some time, with the greatest indulgence, “ another word, my beauty, and I’ll serve you as I did when you were a little fury ten years old, stop your vixen rose-bud lips with a kiss.”

Up she started, twisting her shawl about her waist, and throwing the ends over her shoulder ; — and here I must observe to you, Howard, how wonderfully she is improved in person within these three years. Though turned of two-and-twenty, she does not appear more than seventeen ; her face and figure are enchanting, and every action is grace. Whether it was that I had never before seen her in tears, or worked up to such strong and genuine emotion, for her grief was sincere, I think until now I scarcely knew how lovely she is.

Pretending that her aim was to beat the Doctor, who fortunately is at this time free from the gout, I endeavoured to interpose, when, to our utter astonish-

ment, she exclaimed, “ *I’ll go to Teneriffe myself; I’ll see Eliot also. Why the deuce should I not go as well as Jane? Why should Jane enjoy all the pleasures of life, and I none?* ”

This truly comic, or rather absurd view of the business, put us all into greater good humour ; and as it is in vain to preach consistency to determined inconsistent people, we could only laugh at her declaration, until Dr. H— observed, “ *What! Go with us, my charming fairy! With all my heart, provided you lock up your nerves in your jewel-box before you set out.* ”

“ *Hold your tongue, Doctor ; with or without nerves, I’ll become as fine a Canary bird as any of you. — Defend me ! To think for one instant of going away, and leaving me behind among these savage islanders, (savage islanders !) whilst every soul I love will be at Teneriffe. — When you sail, I sail ; where you land, I land ; where you stay, I stay. Poor dear Eliot ! how I do long to see him, and I will see him, in spite of you all.* ”

Giving way to a fresh flood of tears, she ran out of the room, and was followed by Mrs. Grantley. Thus were we left to our own reflections.

“ Ah,” said the Doctor, “ long before she reaches her dressing-room, she will have changed her mind. To-morrow she meets her old dowager of a mother-in-law, to attend Dorchester races, and the ball in the evening. On the next day they are engaged to the officers’ play at Weymouth, and on the third they give us the slip for Bath or London.”

And so it proved. — The two Countesses are at present at Clifton, where they have taken a house for six months, and from whence we have just received a cargo of valuable presents for Claudio, from her aunt, who desires me to inform you, that, *perhaps*, she may pay you a visit in your African island next year.

Prepare then, Howard, to see us at the time you have appointed ; and, in the mean while, reflect, with gratitude to Heaven, on the great and invaluable blessings still left you, a princely fortune,

a lovely, sensible, and most affectionate child, amiable sisters, excellent friends, and, lastly, an old, faithful, and ever-attached school-fellow, in your

HENRY CLONMORE.

END OF PART THE FIRST.

PART THE SECOND.

LETTER XIII.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to his Wife.

Teneriffe.

AFTER a pleasant and prosperous voyage of fourteen days, my dear Louisa, we landed safely on this most beautiful island, of which I may hereafter give you some short description ; but, conscious that you are now all anxiety to hear particularly of the welfare of one individual, among the thousands inhabiting it, I hasten to describe the meeting with our friend.

My fellow passengers, Mrs. Grantley and little Claudy, bore the voyage well ; so did our servants : but I must acknowledge, our greatest pleasure was derived from the society of Dr. H—, who, as you have often remarked, can be, *when he pleases*, the most agreeable man on earth. His information, his experience,

his medical skill, his cheerful raillery, and the sort of protection he afforded us all, (for he has been this voyage so frequently, that, to him, it seemed really little more than a party of pleasure,) rendered this last fortnight one of the happiest of my life.

The servants suffered most from seasickness ; Mrs. Grantley very little, and I still less. Claudy was ill the two first days ; but, by the time we came in sight of Cape Finisterre, had found her sea-legs, and, much to the amusement of her companions, her lively prattle also. — During the day, she played chiefly on deck, with a child rather older than herself, (who was with its mother, the wife of the mate of the vessel, going back to Gibraltar, having first touched at Teneriffe,) and towards evening climbed on Dr. H—'s knee, and composed herself to sleep in his arms, which he taught her to call her pretty *live* hammock. From thence she was conveyed to one of the cabin beds, where her sleep continued sound until the next morning, when she

was as ready to commence her frolics as we were to attend to them.

The helmsman was particularly struck with her beauty, her archness, and vivacity. As I was sitting near him, with a spy-glass in my hand, I observed him watching her in silence for a length of time, when, unable any longer to contain his gravity, he laughed aloud, and calling to a sailor, who sat splicing a rope at some distance, said, “Tom, *this*,” pointing and nodding at the child, “this puts me in mind of the ‘sweet little *Cherub that sits up aloft.*’* The Cherub has taken a fancy to come down on deck among us.”

I was pleased with the conceit; and, some time after, took occasion to make Claudio slip a dollar into his brown, his hard and honest hand; and I believe, had it been a copper penny, or a five-guinea piece, he would have expressed himself exactly in the same manner. His colour rose, and his eyes glistened, as, smiling with wonder, he looked down

* Dibdin’s well known “Poor Jack.”

upon her, exclaiming, “ God bless it!—Well, if ever I see such a creature in all *my* life!”

Immediately on our landing at Orotava, we were accosted by a gentleman in black, who introduced himself as Don Zulvago, and by him conducted to the house of his Scotch friend, Mr. Balfour. Here congratulations, shaking of hands, and mutual enquiries, took place between the latter and Dr. H—; when it was agreed that, being late, our meeting with Sir Eliot should be deferred until the next morning, and that for that night, we should accept the accommodations offered us by Mr. and Mrs. Balfour at their town house.

From Don Zulvago’s account, it appeared that Sir Eliot had spent many successive days on the heights, watching with his glass the approach of vessels, — that he had returned home languid, feverish, and dispirited, particularly the evening before, and that he had not been able to take his usual ride or walk that morning.

As it has been his invariable and well-known custom, since the death of his wife, to breakfast alone, our new Spanish acquaintance, whom we met before noon the next day, advised us to let that meal, sacred to grief and retrospection, pass quietly; after which Dr. H—— and Mr. Balfour, with myself, should go to the house, and prepare his mind to receive his sister and his child.

To this plan I at first objected, thinking that the climax of emotion being the sight of Claudio, he ought to see her at once, and be thus spared all unnecessary pain; but I was soon silenced by Dr. H—— calling out, in his usual style, “Nonsense, sir! prating about what you don’t understand. Just do as we desire you, and leave the rest to us.”

As I appeared still refractory, Mr. Balfour had the goodness to explain Dr. H——’s meaning, in rather clearer language than the worthy physician would deign to make use of himself.

“Sir Eliot’s sister being of a cold disposition, as I am told, and the child still an infant, no sympathy can be called

forth by them on the part of your friend, whose strong emotions would thus be thrown back upon himself; whereas at the first sight of *you*, conscious that you understand his feelings, he will give way to them without restraint; his mind will thus be relieved, and he will afterwards meet his child and sister with comparative calmness, perhaps even carry the little girl about for some time in his arms, and all will go on smoothly and without danger."

Dr. H—— was right, Louisa; every thing passed as he had foretold. — After breakfasting with Mr. Balfour and Don Zulvago, leaving Mrs. Grantley and the child behind, (and, indeed, they were not yet risen,) we roee a few miles up the country, and soon arrived at Sir Eliot's new residence, most justly named by him an earthly paradise.

On alighting at a garden door, and traversing a colonnade, we were shown into a small library, which, by the precise mode of its being fitted up, seemed purposely adapted to the reception of strangers; and here the Doctor, Mr.

Balfour, and Don Zulvago, left me sitting, standing, and walking, with breathless impatience, for upwards of half an hour. They had followed a servant across a gallery, and had disappeared through a red baize door at the extremity of it.

My anxiety was at last wound to so great a height, I was tempted to go after them, when, in striding once more across the room, I happened accidentally to cast my eyes the contrary way, when I saw them all cross the colonnade, mount their mules at the garden gate, and ride slowly back the road we had come.

At the same instant, another servant appeared at the opposite door, and imagine, Louisa, the sudden and joyful impression caused on me, by the sight of Sir Eliot's rich livery of dark blue velvet, gold, and red, having been so long accustomed to the undress drab liveries worn at Oakland Park,— worn on account of the absence of the master.

In a low voice, and with a Spanish accent, the man asked me to follow him. I started forward, and when we reached the large folding red doors at the end of

the gallery, “ My master is within, Señor,” he said, pointing, and disappeared at a small door at the side.

It was then that the similarity of my situation, when repairing to Oakland Park to seek the lost owner, struck me forcibly. We were now assuredly within a few steps of each other, a single door only was between us, and that half open, and yet I hesitated to go on: an unaccountable weight seemed fastened on my limbs, and, in proportion to the eagerness of my wishes to spring forward, I felt, as if under the influence of the nightmare, actually fixed to the spot.

At last I put my hand on the lock, and at the same instant, heard a faint voice within call out, “ Clonmore!” The next moment we were face to face; we grasped each other’s hands; we sat down at the same time; we rose together, took a few steps across the room, again met, once more shook hands, and turned away without uttering a word.

Had Dr. H—— been present, perhaps he would have had reason to call us a couple of blockheads; but luckily we had

no witnesses of our folly, and soon recovered spirits to speak.

I again saw my friend, it is true, but not the same Eliot Howard I had parted with.—I now gazed upon the very original of the picture we left behind us at Oakland Park ; if there is any difference, the portrait has the advantage, for so ghastly, so consumptive, so wan and desponding a figure I never beheld.

“ Where is my child ?” was his first question ; “ How is my sister ?” the second ; and, “ You had a pleasant voyage, I hear ?” immediately followed ; when the change in his voice struck me with a sorrow and surprise not to be described.—My cheerful answers, however, soon brought us round to the topics of common life ; during which, perceiving I seemed chill and cold, (for a strong easterly wind and misty rain made me feel as if in a more northern rather than southern latitude,) he rang the bell, and ordered fresh fuel.

The hearth, or rather fire-place, soon blazed with small well piled faggots of fragrant wood ; and as I drew near it to

enjoy the comfortable warmth, I congratulated him on his taste in substituting fires for the cheerless foreign custom of stoves and conductors.

The servant who brought in the last batch of wood was followed by a fine large full-grown Newfoundland dog, in whom I had some difficulty of recognising my old friend Carlo ; for if we may judge from the good case he is in at present, he certainly has not shared his master's sorrows, though he has his fortunes. His noble person exhibits the sure effects of good living, ease, and peace of mind ; and so I told him, as he stretched himself at full length at Sir Eliot's feet on the mat before the fire.

Chocolate being served in, our friend readily partook of it with me, and then it was I could more easily snatch a few hasty examinations of his person. — The features are of course not changed, but their expression wholly so. — Whether he smile or look dejected, whether he speaks or is silent, all is changed : there is now a mild composure in his manner, a slow movement in every action, a pathetic

monotony of voice not to be explained : added to which, I soon perceived he has lost the habit of keeping up a connected conversation, the result of solitude, and a long association with foreigners. — He is mournfully absent, at times bewildered ; and not unfrequently, fancying himself alone in the room, utters some incoherent expression, or rises and walks slowly to and fro. — A loose wrapping gown of pale blue damask was folded round his tall wasted figure, as represented in the picture sent to Claudio. His hair is still in its natural state, but the original light brown, even at this early period of life, is much mixed with white.— The once rapid lustre of his large dark grey eyes is replaced by a steady look of the most tender dejection. Sometimes slowly raising themselves to the various objects around, as if with painful exertion, inspiring the beholder with compassion, not unmixed with doubt that all is not right within, which doubt is immediately banished when he speaks.

From constant exposure to the sun and air, during his attendance on his builders and workmen, his complexion is much

darker than it was; but his hands retain all their usual delicate whiteness, and even display that peculiar hue which indicates great weakness of body, and decay of strength.

Thus were we seated, I on one side of the fire, he on the other, leaning his head on his arm at a small table placed back, his eyes fixed upon the blazing wood, listening to my anecdote of the pilot and the cherub, when the door was slowly and carefully opened by some person from without, and a little figure cautiously admitted:— the door was again gently closed, and there stood Claudio, her hands raised and joined over her head, (a favourite attitude you may remember of her's,) and her lovely countenance beaming with joy.

The loud, sudden, and cheerful cry of “Papa!” caused Sir Eliot to start from his thoughtful position; he looked up, and then slowly turned his eyes towards the spot where she continued standing: the paleness of death spread itself over his face, and his hand dropped nerveless by his side.

It was then that his look and attitude bore the most striking resemblance to the picture, on which Claudio had for such a length of time lavished her caresses. — Again she called out in her own brisk, sweet, and clear voice, — “Papa! papa!” and ran to his knee.

I eagerly rose to his assistance, “Be composed,” I whispered anxiously, “for Heaven’s sake be composed; do not, at an instant, irrecoverably destroy the fruits of many months’ successful endeavours to reconcile her to your present appearance. Recollect the powerful effect of first impressions; this is the hour to make a lasting one in your favour on the mind of your child: whereas, if you give way to the agony that is working in your bosom, you terrify her from you, and destroy all the happy effects you wished the picture to produce, and which you see have in reality succeeded. — Whilst you remain passive and quiet, she will be no more afraid of you than of your portrait; and, as you perceive, will presently fondle you with the same confidence she now does the dog.”

Claudy had by this time, by means of kissing and stroking, roused Carlo to acknowledge her kindness with great thankfulness ; but when his gratitude began to be rather rough, she, with the utmost familiarity, sought shelter between her father's knees ; then climbing upon them, and standing upright, she clasped her arms round his neck, and leaning over his shoulder with a see-saw motion, hummed "little bo-peep," with no more restraint in her manner than as if they had never parted.

I, however, carefully watched Sir Eliot's features ; and when I saw by the trembling of his limbs as he pressed her to his bosom, and the convulsion of his lip when looking at me, as if to say — "I can support it no longer," I made a snatch at Claudio, playfully caught her in my arms, tossed her in the air, called Carlo out of the room, and ran with her across the gallery back into the small library.

Here, on summoning the Spanish servant, whom I had before seen, I was soon joined by Robert and Nurse Morton,

to whose charge I left the child, and after answering their anxious enquiries concerning their master, I returned to Sir Eliot's room.

To my great relief, and no small surprise, I found him still seated, and though I had not been absent twenty minutes, already calmly conversing with Mrs. Grantley and Dr. H—, who having watched me from the opposite door, had entered the moment I quitted the room with Claudio.

On reseating myself at the fire, I kept supplying it with fuel, in order, by employment, to conceal the emotions that were now swelling in my own breast, on being assured that the fondest hopes of our unhappy friend would be completely realised ; when Dr. H— seizing my arm, shook the last faggot from my hand, and exclaimed, “ What the vengeance, sir, do you wish to set the house on fire the moment you put your foot in it ? ” — Whilst Mrs. Grantley, on the other hand, quietly sipping her chocolate, seemed bent on putting her brother's fortitude to the test, by enquiring, in her placid

manner, whether it was the custom of this island for gentlemen to make their own breakfast.

Now this was, as you are aware, Louisa, so very tender a point with Sir Eliot, that neither Dr. H—— nor I could ever have hazarded a word upon the subject ; we therefore exchanged looks, mutually dreading the effect it might produce ; when how were we amazed to hear him reply, after a moment's pause, with an air of cheerfulness and even gallantry, —

“ Yes, my dear Jane, in this house invariably, until the arrival of a lady to do the honours.” — And from that hour he has given up his solitary breakfast, and partaken of the most social of all meals in our company.

It was now that I fully understood and admitted the truth of Lady Alford's assertion, and which at first I found it so difficult to credit — that from the icy temperature of Mrs. Grantley's disposition, she was the best companion for a person of her brother's warm and sensible nature.

I am aware, from my own experience,

that any other person would use artifice to calm Sir Eliot's spirits, and divert his mind, which artifice would, by being seen through, soon lose its effect—finesse usually defeats its own purpose: whereas Mrs. Grantley's genuine simplicity and *bonhommie*, (if I may use the term,) though they at first startle the hearer, lead to this good-natured and indulgent remark—"Well, you are the most innocent, frozen, inoffensive, strange sort of woman I ever had to deal with!"

Thus did this long-dreaded, this formidable meeting, go off in a much more decent style than could be expected; for which, Dr. H—— says, and with justice, we may thank him. Had he not arranged matters, a return of Sir Eliot's disorder might have been the consequence; and we, Louisa, to our sorrow, know the miseries attending a relapse.

How I long to hear an account of my poor Dudley; he was nearly recovered when I left England, and I hope to receive in a few days a true bill of health signed by his beloved mother.—With such a mother, and such a physician as

Dr. V——n, God bless him ! I still have good hopes. —

You will hear from me twice more before I quit Teneriffe, in which letters, according to your wishes, I shall endeavour to be as particular concerning the inhabitants of this enchanting marine hermitage as possible ; and also give you a little sketch of the place itself.

Sir Eliot begs me to return you his most grateful thanks for consenting so cheerfully to my charitable visit, as he is pleased to call it, and desires me to say he does not despair yet of seeing yourself here on some future happy day. Ever, dearest Louisa,

Your affectionate husband,

HENRY CLONMORE.

LETTER XIV.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to his Wife.

Euphorbia, Teneriffe.

THANKS, my dearest Louisa! — your letter has afforded me the sincerest gratification, as by it I learn that my little Dudley at length acknowledges himself wholly free from pain. In return, I am happy in being able to inform you, that a great and visible change for the better has taken place in Sir Eliot's person, health, and spirits.

The uniform composure, and yet kind attention of Mrs. Grantley's manners, operating on his mind like oil upon a troubled sea, wrought the first improvement, which was succeeded by his appearing to take great interest in watching Claudy's childish gambols, and attempts at improvement, under the tuition of her aunt.

My conversation, as it refers to our boyhood, and school and college life, soothes his mind; whilst the whims and blunt contradictions of the Doctor amuse, and Balfour and Zulvago's local and general information gratify and improve their hearer.

On the second day after our arrival, Mrs. Grantley accepted the charge her brother offered her, and without the smallest infringement on the calmness of her usual demeanour, seemed instantly to look and move the mistress of the house.

I was the next morning seated with the Doctor at the window of the room appropriated to myself, looking through a fine telescope of Dollond's at the shipping in the roads, when a gentle tap at the door was followed by an enquiry, in a female voice, of — “ May we be admitted ? ”

“ Yes,” cried the Doctor, “ this once; but in future let widow ladies beware how they intrude into the apartments of a widower bewitched.”

Mrs. Grantley, followed by her bro-

ther, came in ; and, with a placid smile, approaching me, said, whilst she looked round the room, “ I hope, Mr. Clonmore, you find every thing here snug and comfortable ? ” I wish, Louisa, you could have seen Sir Eliot’s countenance at that moment ; a sudden gleam of pleasure passed over it as he repeated *snug* and *comfortable !* and then added, “ Those two words are so truly English — I have not heard them for such a length of time ; they bring England with such identity before my eyes, that I am almost tempted, Jane, to salute the dear lips which have given me such delightful retrospection.”

As quiet and composed as the statue of Vesta (which she resembles in feature) Mrs. Grantley heard his remark ; and then turned to Claudy, who now ran in, and desired her to show me the pretty new apartments papa had given her.

Away flew the impetuous child, whilst we were scarcely able to keep up with her, leading us up one gallery, and down another ; thrusting her little head in at

every open door, with, “ This is it — no, this is not it ; Claudy right, and Claudy wrong,” until she completely bewildered herself and us, when Sir Eliot, enchanted with her vivacity, caught her up in his arms, saying he would be our guide.

It appears that Mrs. Grantley, previous to her acceding to her brother’s request of choosing her own apartments, had, attended by Martella, examined the whole of the house, and on perceiving those which Sir Eliot had hitherto appropriated to himself, was at no loss to declare her choice. Accordingly, with her usual sedateness of voice and look, she silently fixed upon a suite of rooms, into which she iminedately gave orders for her own luggage and that of Claudy to be removed.

She now pointed out to us the arrangements she purposed making, at the same time alluding to future plans. “ I think, brother, with your leave, this bed-chamber, dressing-room, and light closet on the right hand, must be Claudy’s, and those on the left, mine ; whilst this larger

apartment, dividing and communicating with both suites, ought to be fitted up as a ladies' drawing-room, for our mutual accommodation ; and as I intend to devote it, hereafter, entirely to the business of education, I should wish it to be understood, that no *general* company can ever be admitted here."

Under what various shapes does exquisite sensibility show itself! A man possessing blunter feelings than Sir Eliot does would have given some kind of answer to these words ; *he* could give none. He threw her one look, and then turned away and walked to the window. Here I beheld another proof, how truly a disposition such as Mrs. Grantley's was suited to that of our friend. Any other than herself, mistaking that profound emotion of gratitude, tenderness, and admiration, (which prevented speech,) for, at best, indifference, might have followed him, and by exacting an answer, broken the charm : this worthy being, on the contrary, continued speaking to me and Dr. H—— of her various plans re-

specting Claudio and herself, as if her brother was no longer in the room.

“ Ah ! 'tis all fine talking,” said the Doctor, “ but you forget one thing, and without that, I would not give a fig for your prospectus, — the flogging-post, my good madam : — hoy ! hoy, Claudio, where's the flogging-post.”

Good sense, affection, and propriety, thus in possession of a magic wand, her arrangements were all made in less than a week. The walls of the rooms are of highly polished white stucco : those of Claudio are hung with pale rose-coloured silk ; her own with draperies of light blue, the furniture of their drawing-room being a mixture of pea-green and brown. — I was this morning permitted to take a survey of the whole ; and the elegance with which the latter is fitted up would do credit even to the taste of Lady Alford. The pictures with which it is adorned, the capital piano, book-cases, flower-stands, drawing and work boxes in short, every ornamental article with which ladies' apartments are usually decorated, are here to be seen.

To you, Louisa, as a *young* lady and a mother, all these trifling particulars I know will be interesting, conscious that you are, equally with myself, anxious as to the future welfare of little Claudy. — Could you but have seen her when her rooms were completed, and she was put in possession of them !

“ Claudy’s pink curtains, and Claudy’s pretty mats,” (the floors are all covered with fine India matting,) “ dear aunt’s blue sofa,” (introduced at Sir Eliot’s request,) and “ aunt’s fine looking-glasses,” were her themes for that day ; and could you have witnessed the pleasure with which her father watched her bounding steps, as she jumped from room to room, eagerly and boisterously examining every thing around her, whilst she laughed and sang with joy, you must have shared in his delight.

And now that I have introduced you into the ladies’ apartments, suppose, my dear Louisa, you accompany me in imagination back to my own.

They consist of three rooms, opening into each other ; a bed-room, dressing-

room, and study, and are totally detached and secluded from the rest of the house, by a long passage, at each end of which are red baize doors. From one of the windows of the study runs a viranda, which, by a flight of steps on the outside of the house, communicates to the garden. The two first rooms are fitted up with every article that constitutes comfort ; and the latter in a style adapted for a male visitor and a bachelor, and for such, as it appears, these and other corresponding apartments are to be reserved.

On my remarking to Sir Eliot, how greatly they resembled our chambers at the University, and that I could almost fancy myself still a college fellow, he, with a conscious smile, drew back a small sliding board inserted in a pannel over the inside of the door, and I read, in gold letters, “ Clonmore’s Dormitory.” Whilst looking earnestly at this proof of friendship and attachment, he added, closing the sliding board, and clapping me on the shoulder, —

“ Whilst you leave your wife behind you, you must still consider yourself a

fellow: the next time *you* come, bring her with you, and you shall be put into more sociable apartments."

And indeed, my dear Louisa, could you find leisure, and summon courage to attempt the voyage, the sight of our long valued and now nearly restored friend, and his beautiful abode, would be no trifling compensation for the fatigue.

And beautiful, even you, my love, who are rather difficult in your taste as to the situation of country seats, would pronounce this. Perfectly secluded, as if the only human dwelling on the island, it yet enjoys all the advantages of security, and social intercourse, by being within a short distance of the large city of Orotava, which stands on a rising slope, about four miles from the port of the same name.

Instead of planting trees, and rearing shrubs to shelter and adorn his new estate, (with exception to a few of English growth,) Sir Eliot, having made his purchase, had to cut down a few acres of forest trees, in order to procure space

sufficient whereon to build. The ground was cleared in the shape of an amphitheatre, and the house of white stone, erected full fronting the sea, on a grand and sublime eminence; at the back rises, in a gradual slope, an extensive forest of large chesnut and other trees, whose luxuriant foliage at once shade and protect it.

On each side of the mansion, and at some distance from it, runs a marble colonnade; behind which, like verdant wings, extends a thick grove of shrubs, called the heath tree, rising above twenty feet; that on the right is terminated by an abrupt and tremendous precipice; the one on the left, by a gigantic rock, upon the summit of which grow a few scattered cedars.

The ground on this side of the house has been levelled, and sown with grass seed; the verdure, kept smooth as the lawn at Oakland Park, and constantly watered, is here and there embellished with plots of flowers, (chiefly raised from English seed and roots,) and surrounded by basket work.

Before the south front of the mansion runs a wide green viranda, from which is carried, on each side, a double screen, in a concave shape, of light open iron-work ; between this are planted vines of the finest quality ; and whilst I now write, the whole surface of the screen is covered with the richest profusion of that species of grape, of which the best wine in the island is made.

The kitchen, the laundry, and other offices, are wholly detached from the house, being built in a sort of grove of fig-trees, about a hundred yards distant, and yet connected by a covered archway, admitting four persons to walk abreast. The stables for the cows and mules, asses and goats, (for, as yet, he has no horses,) are situated still further, on an extensive plot of ground to the right.

Sir Eliot is now opening through the forest an admirable walk of about three miles in circuit, which, when finished, will be a capital addition to the comforts of this residence, as, in all weathers, it will afford the inhabitants a sheltered place of exercise. — I say shel-

tered, because, though that range of cypress trees through which it runs is deprived of all its lower branches, the topmost that are left form a canopy, excluding, by their luxuriance, wind, sun, and rain.

Besides these natural parasols and parapluies, he has erected others in the shape of elegant recesses, which are built of cedar and mahogany, and fitted up with benches, tables, and chairs, as we remember to have remarked and admired, some years ago, in the grounds at Claremont, in Surrey. To each of these alcoves is annexed a garden, on which the sun is permitted to dart its hottest beams; and here grow, in profusion, melons, pears, apples, oranges, pomegranates, figs, peaches, lemons, and grapes. Indeed, all these fruits, and many others unknown to us, grow wild among the hills and valleys of this island, and to a size and perfection scarcely ever seen in Europe.

At different openings of this forest-walk, as he calls it, we catch the most sublime views of the ocean, the mountains, and their valleys; and in the south-

western horizon, the receding heights are crowned with the towering snow-covered Peak.

My favourite walk, at present, is that which winds downward from the forest to the broken plains below. Streams of the clearest water gush from the crevices of the volcanic rocks, unite in little rivers, form a cataract in miniature, meet other cataracts, join forces in one grand, majestic fall, and burst upon the rocks below with thundering noise and rising vapour. They then murmur forward, over a gently declining hill, and settle in calm tranquillity in a deep lake at its foot. To this spot I often bring my book, yet seldom read. Here, fenced by aloes, surrounded by hedges of myrtle and geranium, shaded by trees ever in fruit and blossom, I take idle pleasure in watching and listening to the large flocks of Canary birds, (of a yellowish-green,) parrots, and other tropical birds, with which the branches are thronged, whilst enjoying a sun, a sky, an air, a climate in short, of which a native of Britain can form no idea.

Have I given my Louisa any tolerable notion of the outside of this magnificent abode? If I have, then imagine an interior displaying every foreign elegance, joined to true English cleanliness and simplicity. The building is of white stone, and flat-roofed. The ceilings and staircases, the floors and furniture, as is the custom in these islands, are all of cedar wood. The hall, the great and small library, the drawing, dining, and billiard rooms, are appropriately furnished and fitted up; whilst above, (the house consists of only one story,) in every chamber, dressing-room, and study, (or, as you ladies call it, boudoir; and we men can be as sulky as yourselves,) nothing is left to wish for.

In compliment to his Spanish friend, Sir Eliot asked Don Zulvago to name his habitation, as he had already, at his request, placed the corner-stone; on which he instantly replied, “ Call it *Euphorbia.*”

This is the name of a large, juicy, indigenous plant, which, when dried, serves the inhabitants for fuel. Great quantities of

this had been rooted up, and given to the neighbouring mountaineers, when clearing the ground to dig the foundations of the house. Sir Eliot immediately adopted the idea, and the estate is now known upon the island by the name of Eu-phobia.

I have now described to you, my love, the present appearance of this new abode of our friend's; but I have no doubt every succeeding year will find it embellished: and, to be candid, I only hope that he will, (all idea of his return to England being over,) continue to take pleasure in extending and improving it; otherwise, be assured, his mind will suffer a relapse.

How much the Balfours regret that Claudy is not a boy; then might the work of education, they remark, soon begin: or were she a few years older, she might, in the course of a year or so, occupy his thoughts; but, as Lady Alford, also, justly observes, Claudy, for four or five years to come, will require no other in-

struction than what Mrs. Grantley is so fully capable and willing to impart.

Zulvago opened his mind on this subject to the Doctor and myself, the other day, in one of our walks ; when the former gravely advised the Spaniard to set the rumour afloat, through the island, that a treasure of gold and precious stones is concealed in the hitherto unexplored (*because concealed*) sepulchral caves of the Guanches, (the aborigines of the island,) and advise Sir Eliot to set his native labourers to seek and open them ; adding, that by the time he is convinced no treasure is to be found, Claudio will be old enough to learn Latin.

Don Zulvago, who reasons with that discrimination which shows a thorough knowledge of the human heart, said, he had long wished to propose to Sir Eliot a sail to Madeira or Lisbon, and at either place to remain a few weeks ; adding, “ Your friend has now so many blessings in his very grasp, that his hands will soon begin to relax, and he may lose them irrecoverably. Let him be suddenly snatched, for a time, out of their reach,

and he will become more conscious of their value. To be thoroughly convinced what a treasure our home is, we must occasionally quit it. We must remove ourselves from the objects of our affection, to be truly sensible how closely they are twined round our hearts. The heart then pulls them back ; it seeks to hold, it persists in retaining them. We must fear to lose, ere we are inclined to struggle to hold, and keep."

At these words I looked stedfastly at the Spaniard, and felt convinced he argued from experience. There was an unusual glow of countenance, a fiery expression of the eye, not to be mistaken ; when, immediately aware of the inference I might draw from his observation, he coolly turned away from us both, humming a scrap of an English march. As Lady Alford once remarked of this noble Castilian, he is more of a Petrarch than a Cymon ; — believe me, dear Louisa, his whistling is not from *want* of thought.

Dr. H—, who had not before seen this trait of character, stopped suddenly

with surprise ; and then, with droll mimicry, repeated, in a solemn tone, “ Sir, “ Our only lesson is to learn to suffer, And he who knows not that, was born for nothing ; ”

and ended with a whistle of “ And we will a hunting go.” — This was no bad hit at the Spaniard, whose pocket companion, and constant study, are “ Young’s Night’s Thoughts.”

I know not whether Sir Eliot will consent to this trip to Madeira with Don Zulvago : if he does, we shall remain at Euphorbia until their return ; Mrs. Grantley to instruct Claudy, Dr. H—— to contradict her, I to romp with her, and Carlo to defend her. A little personage of great dignity is this same Claudy Howard, and she already begins to feel her consequence.

Tell Dudley, Sir Eliot intends to send him by me a chest of oranges, gathered out of his own garden ; and that Claudy has presented me, for him, three red feathers from a parrot’s wing, as a pledge of remembrance ; but whether of love,

or an opposite sentiment, her little ladyship did not condescend to explain.

Dr. H—— accompanies me back to England, and has consented to spend a few weeks with us before he goes to town. Prepare Turner for my coming, as he may wish to look out for other duty. I wish I could get him settled here as chaplain. I have already sounded Sir Eliot on the subject ; and think, if I could bring it about, it would be no bad arrangement for either party.— The building a small chapel, and its consecration, is already talked of ; and you may take an opportunity of speaking to Turner upon it : no bad speculation for him, unless, indeed, he has a bishopric in view, which many a *70l.* a-year curate fancies he is born to achieve, while the archdeacon and dean have some doubts upon the subject.

Adieu, dearest Louisa. — I shall write a few lines to you previous to my return, shortly after the receipt of which you may expect

Your affectionate

HENRY CLONMORE.

LETTER XV.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to his Wife.

MY DEAR LOUISA,

Euphorbia, Teneriffe.

THE trip to Madeira was proposed to Sir Eliot, who objected to it, and in that calm and decisive manner, which left no hope of a change of mind. We therefore continue the same family party as when I wrote last, with the exception of one individual. — I think I mentioned in one of my previous letters, that Sir Eliot, in compliment to his sister, has, since her arrival, invariably breakfasted with the family. Yesterday morning he joined us, as usual, and at his entrance into the room, spoke to Perez, and received some sort of answer ; but as I have as yet made no proficiency in the Spanish language, all I could understand was the name of Don Zulvago, repeatedly and

rapidly pronounced by the servant. Sir Eliot turned to me, with a sort of smiling wonder, saying, “He is off.”

“Who? Don Zulvago? He was here last night.”

“True; but he is not to be found in the island this morning. He rose at five o’clock, as Perez informs me, walked to Orotava, stepped on board a frigate bound to Porto Santo, (an island about 17 leagues N.E. of Madeira,) and is, by this time, beyond the Salvages, (a small island N.E. of Teneriffe.)

Many remarks were made upon this mode of taking French leave; and we every one agreed, that his society would be much missed. Sir Eliot at all times took great pleasure in his conversation: by Mrs. Grantley he will be regretted at the whist-table; Dr. H—— declares the backgammon-board may keep its mouth shut until his return; Mr. Balfour will lose his equal in a game of chess, and I my superior at billiards. However, we were all very speedily reconciled to our loss of his company, when Mrs. Balfour,

the same evening, remarked, “ Perhaps he is gone upon the same errand which took him from the island two years since, to relieve a few captives from Algiers.”

“ Very likely,” added her husband ; “ or to rebuild a burned village, or succour a score or two of distressed emigrants, or prop a mercantile house : in short, he goes through the most important business of life with less indifference than I tie my neckcloth.”

Thus is our company lessened by the departure of a most invaluable member ; and we can only hope, that his return will be as sudden and unexpected as his flight has been.

Our mode of life in this place, from its extreme simplicity and novelty, is very pleasing. The habits of civilization are so well blended with those dictated by nature and sound sense,—the polished manners of England so skilfully grafted on the customs of the island, peculiar to the Spanish character, that they cannot fail to strike a new-comer with surprise, which ever ends in approbation.

As breakfast is one of the meals to which Claudio is admitted, she contrives to attract all our attention, by hopping round the table like a Robin Red-breast, or a Robin Goodfellow, to see what she can pick up, (this, at nine o'clock, being on an average her third breakfast.) From one, she receives an inch of cake; from another, a spoonful of marmalade; a couple of grapes from a third, and a sup of coffee from a fourth. — These ceremonies being duly performed, she and Mrs. Grantley retire to their *own* drawing-room; and we disperse, or remain together, as inclination prompts, to ride or walk, read or converse, or we return to our separate rooms for the purpose of writing or private study.

By a large bell, hung from the top of a mast-head, which also bears the British colours, erected on the high summit of a rock, commanding a noble and extensive prospect, we are summoned to dress; and in half an hour after we assemble in the library, and from thence repair to Sir Eliot's hospitable table, on which dinner is regularly served at twelve o'clock. —

Yes, Louisa, such is the fact ; twelve o'clock is the established dinner-hour at Euphorbia ; and, however aukward I might find this primitive custom on my arrival, I am at present perfectly reconciled to it.

Sir Eliot having totally abolished regular visits, and substituted the invariable custom of receiving at his abundant and elegant table, with the most friendly welcome, all strangers introduced by Don Zulvago, Mr. Balfour, the consuls, the Governor General of the Canaries, and five or six other of the respectable inhabitants, we are ever certain of meeting with pleasant and intelligent society every day in the week, excepting Sunday, which is reserved for the private enjoyment of a family party, and the strict performance of religious duties, when I of course officiate.

This plan of Sir Eliot's is most admirable, and its effects proved, particularly by the master ; his spirits are not jaded and harassed by the expectation of company, (as is too often the case even in the highest ranks of life, though assisted to

prepare for them, by stewards, butlers, housekeepers and grooms of the chamber.) No one is asked out of mere compliment, and in return for visits paid. The very ignorance of who is coming gives a zest to the society, and the guest joins his host with all that glow of spirit which is produced by novelty; whilst the owner of the house, on his part, receives him with a fervour inseparable from the welcome bestowed on *unexpected*, yet approved visitors.

I grant that such a mode of life is only suited to a man of Sir Eliot's fortune, and now peculiar situation: it could not be adopted, for example, in an establishment such as our's, where, having only a life interest in my property, and a young and rising family, a well regulated economy is the order of the day; but where it can be substituted for formal and ceremonious visits, it carries with it an excellent effect.

Since Mrs. Grantley has taken up her residence with her brother, the wives, daughters, and sisters of the different consuls and others have accompanied

their male relatives to Euphorbia, and this addition to his society, you must be convinced, Louisa, has not been the least pleasurable effect produced by her arrival.

The wine vanishes with the cloth!—even so, and we also vanish, but not *with* the wine. Mrs. Grantley leads the way back to the library or drawing-room, and here we find coffee and fruits.—We spend half an hour trifling over these: when—prepare for new wonders, Louisa, the *siesta* takes place, we disperse to enjoy the afternoon nap, and in about an hour meet again with refreshed spirits, good-humour, and well-prepared tempers, to join in any occupation and amusement that may be proposed. And thus, even including the nap, one-third, at least, of the time is saved, which, with us, is consumed over our wine after dinner. As for the ladies, we do not pretend to guess what may be their employment on retiring from the dining-table; but I have heard it often remarked, that the two or three hours between their move, and the introduction of tea and

coffee, they find the most tedious throughout the day.

By four o'clock, the company at Euphorbia either join in an excursion on mules, ramble in groups among the vineyards, or ride in a sort of covered machine, which Sir Eliot calls his *sociable-calash*, and which is drawn by oxen.—I generally ride towards the city, where I find abundant interest and amusement in walking up and down the streets, lounging about the shops, examining the inside and outside of the churches, taking a peep at the convents, and getting acquainted with the inhabitants, and the manners and customs of the island, which, however, differ in a very trifling degree from those of Spain.

At seven o'clock, the bell of Euphorbia is again heard, recalling her scattered inmates to the evening repast, which is regularly served in a spacious saloon on the ground-floor,—one side, having fluted marble pillars, which support the roof, is entirely open, or rather, instead of a wall, there hangs from the ceiling in rich and ample folds a crimson damask silk cur-

tain ; this, according to the fineness of the weather, being drawn aside in festoons, displays the magnificent view of the adjacent country sloping downwards, richly covered with corn-fields, fruit-plantations, gardens, and vineyards, interspersed with hanging groves of laurel, myrtle, and orange trees, whose golden produce, when near enough to be distinguished, give a peculiar richness to the scene.—On a fine evening, the spires of the churches of Orotava are beheld glittering in the sun, and beyond is the deep blue sea, covered near the port with sloops, brigantines, frigates, merchantmen, fishing-boats, and indeed vessels of every description.

Here, I repeat, we once more assemble ; but not, as at dinner, round a table : the ample marble slabs at the further end of this open hall are laden with the greatest variety of provisions ; the taste of every nation on the globe seemingly consulted : the Hindoo would here meet his plain boiled rice, and the common-councilman his turtle. We disperse, either taking our station under the roof

of the hall, or on the smooth green, to which it opens by a descent of three marble steps, on which are placed, alternately, urns of growing flowers, tripods, and other ornamental lamps. Whilst regaling on fruits, ices, tea, or whatever inclination prompts us to fetch for ourselves or the ladies, (for no servants are admitted to this meal,) we are here charmed by the wild notes of hundreds of Canary birds, who, whilst preparing to roost, sport around us among the branches of the trees.

Once more the bell rings, (which, fortunately, has so sweet a sound, I was tempted to enquire was it of silver;) and this last, given at ten o'clock, Louisa! is the signal to retire. The guests glide away in the Zulvago fashion; whilst we, according to the honest kind-hearted English mode, wish each good night before we separate, when all repair to their rooms.

I generally read for an hour; but, at about eleven, I could safely lay any wager every individual in the house is in bed; as to being asleep, that is another

question. — By the by, you remember the old source of contention between me and Claudy, — going to bed at night ; and you may recollect, I had fairly conquered her wilfulness on these occasions. Would you credit, that on her first arrival here, flattered by the indulgence of her fond father, and depending on his support, she actually braved me, with the most impudent stare of her lovely eyes, and the prettiest saucy twist of her rosy mouth, when summoned by her nurse, and reminded by me to go to bed.

No, there she continued, leaning on her father's knee, neither attending to Nurse Morton's "Come, Miss Howard!" or her aunt's "Claudy, my dear, don't keep nurse waiting;" or Dr. H——'s loud laugh, and "Comical little fish!" or Sir Eliot's fond whisper, of "Go to bed, my darling."

All were useless, when I, as a family-man, exerted my authority, and, in spite of her screams and cries, and clasping Sir Eliot's leg with both her arms, forced her away, and carried her to her nursery. Here I shut her up in a dark closet

for half an hour, until the storm was hushed ; and, to prevent a recurrence of such rebellious behaviour, I desired her nurse not to let her come down to the drawing-room or hall the next evening. This punishment had its desired effect ; peace is happily restored, and we are as good friends as ever ; though she frequently afterwards reproached me with, “ You very naughty to poor Claudy.”

Thus, dear Louisa, have I given you a full and impartial account of our friend, and this his Atlantic habitation ; and, to be candid with you, my love, were you and our children here, I should require no great persuasion to spend a few weeks longer in this enchanting spot : but, situated as we are, I begin to feel anxious to return to you, my poor Dudley, the rest of the dear little creatures, my excellent pupil, and my worthy parishioners ; even eccentric John Turner, my young curate, and George Delver, my jolly-faced clerk, come sometimes across my remembrance.

Let every one, then, soon expect me back to Bloomfield Rectory, and be pre-

pared with a proper reception. Do you, my beloved wife, meet me with your own smiles ; Dudley with a rosy cheek ; his brothers and sisters with pretty behaviour ; St. Eloi, with an English “ How d’ye do, my friend ? ” my parishioners (though I *am* their rector, and not their curate) with a sincere “ Welcome home, sir ; ” Turner, with his pocket cork-screw, to draw a bottle of *Madeira*-*Madeira* ; and my honest old clerk, with a stiff band, and a clean surplice, (without one iron-mould spot in it,) for the following Sunday.

Ever your affectionate husband,

HENRY CLONMORE.

LETTER XVI.

The Countess of Alford to Mrs. Grantley.

MY DEAR AND MOST BELOVED JANE,

Bath.

THERE'S an affectionate beginning for you ! I like to begin well ; that is generally in our power ; but I cannot pledge myself for the conclusion, as a thousand circumstances may or may not occur, during my writing one letter, to put me out of temper.

I have been spending a few days with my young friend Louisa Clonmore, whose loving mate is, with my old gallant, (Dr. H—, you know,) lately returned from their visit to the outlaws of Teneriffe. Yes, Jane, outlaws, or absentees, if you prefer that still more odious word. You have both leaped the pale of English security and English honour, and must

abide the consequence. The vessel in which Clonmore took his passage home was for many hours chased by a French flag, and narrow was the escape his Reverence had of being disembarked at Rochefort instead of Plymouth, and of ogling a pretty *marchande de modes* at Verdun, instead of giving a pastoral dinner to his precious flock at Bloomfield.

How fortunate that I was not silly enough to persevere in my intention of accompanying you! No, no; Heaven keep me from French privateers, American buccaneers, and Barbary pirates; and no attempting to reach your island without the chance of running foul of these. Never expect to see me among you, until I wish to learn a new quadrille from a Marshal of France, listen to the gallantry of a Yankee beau, and debate whether I should or should not like to become the mother of some future Emperor of Morocco.

Well, Jane, and you like Teneriffe, and you admire Eu-Eu-Euphorbia, the smoothest sounding title I ever heard!

It glides over the tongue like a lump of blanc-mange. The Spaniard was determined the name of the place should be as romantic as his own ; and for my part, I would not believe it was the name of a wild plant, until Clonmore found the passage wherein it is mentioned in Cook's *Voyages*, and then I was convinced it was as appropriate as Oakland, Bloom-field, and half-a-score others with us.

And Clonmore, by his own account, has broken the noble spirit of my darling Claudy, the hector ! locking her up in a dark closet. I suppose you, like a skilful general, made him your pioneer on the thorny road of education. Ah ! Heaven bless you all ! What between her sentimental father, her grave aunt, and the learned Spaniard, Claudy will turn out such a miracle of tenderness, prudence, and knowledge, that not a man on earth will be found worthy her sublime hand.

Oh, these all-perfects ! these fruits of exquisite tuition ! For the life of me, if I know what one good purpose they ever answer. You, my dear Jane, were, I

think, taught by *your* mother, Lady Howard, to read, to write, to cypher, and to work ; and yet, with this limited stock of accomplishments, you contrived to gain the heart of worthy old Grantley ; to be sure, *he* contrived to gain the gout soon after marriage, but that was no fault of *your's*, you never bargained for that, you know.

I have the honest soul now before my eyes ! with his parrot nose, and black velvet cap, put on something like that in Pope's portrait prefixed to the Iliad, his spectacles across his forehead, whilst unfolding his dispatches, looking as important as if, like Jupiter, with scales in his hand, he was weighing the fate of empires, — one gouty leg upon a chair, the other clad in a smart silk stocking and shining shoe, which plainly said, “ there was once a pair of us : ” his crutch on one side, his ptisan on the other. Such was diplomatic Grantley, *at whom, and from whom, I have had many a good-humoured hearty laugh.*

As to *my* education, Lady Howard, *my* mamma, aware of her predecessor's

limited acquirements, and your deficiencies, my excellent Jenny, ran into the other extreme ; and almost overlooking the trifling talents of reading, writing, and working, made me what I am — aye, and what am I ?

Had you, Jane, paid me a visit the last time I was in Paris, I can assure you that your passport to the highest society *there* would have ran thus : — “ Mrs. Grantley, half-sister to the first private dancer, singer, and performer on the harp and piano in the Republic.” — Would this have pleased you, Jane ? I rather think I should have been more flattered, if presented, in *our* town of London, as “ a near connection of prim Widow Grantley, one of the best daughters, wives, and mothers, in the United Kingdom.” — Well, with all my folly, I find I am a very sensible woman, at least when I am writing letters ; — in practice you shall judge.

I gave my frolicsome mother-in-law the slip at Bath, and went to Bloomfield, upon an invitation of a month or so, where I was well enough pleased for the

few first days ; but when the novelty of Clonmore's return was over, when I had fired off all my witty squibs against the Doctor, how heartily tired I did get of the whole set ! of *you* and all, of course ! Their description brought every one of you before my “ mind's eye ;” and then we had for ever a repetition of Eliot's die-away adagio eccentricities, (for I find it is no longer allegro and con spirito with him;) then followed your deep sky-blue silken rooms, Claudy's piony bed-curtains, Merchant Balfour's gliding smooth-the-way bows, and Don Zulvago's thoughtful whistling, when playing at bob-cherry with a bunch of grapes.

Little Parson Turner, with his open mouth, his round dancing eyes, his hands in his pockets, and his stretched-out legs, mightily pleased ! devoured all this intelligence, wishing himself at Euphorbia, I believe, with no great aversion to all the good things it contains ; whilst I, happy to escape from the whole group of oddities, winged back my way to Bath, and Clifton Mall, with all its delights ; I mean the delights of the Mall, of the

pump-room, the ball-room, the concerts, and libraries ; for, as I never studied either drawing or botany, what the deuce inclination can I have for the beauties of nature ?

And so Eliot wanders about his new-fangled abode like an Arabian magician, at whose touch of the wand it had sprung from the mines ? And the Balfours are sociable, chit-chat neighbours, are they ? And you *do* see a rational soul now and then ? But I am so sorry you have lost your piping —— defend me ! what was I going to say ! — bulfinch, I vow.— Well, you know who I mean ; and he is gone to Porto Santo, is he ? I wish he had come to England, with our grum and grim physician, and jockey rector, — I have so great a wish to see him.

Their description of this Spaniard's person is really so indefinite and unsatisfactory, that though I put fifty questions as to his length, breadth, width, hue, voice, manner, and dress, no information could I gain. They describe tolerably well the latitude, longitude, and complexion, of all the rest of the

folks, but my dexterity has failed in finding out what sort of a spark is your Zulvago.

Your Zulvago! the deuce is in my pen this day: the word is written, and must go, for I've no tear ready at hand to wash it out. Awful, ominous word! Take care, Jane! Have a care, my precious! Remember, fat, fair, and forty; *fat* you are not, neither are you *fair*, sweet sister mine; — but — do you recollect, Jane, how old *I* am? I think about nineteen, a few years more or less; and I have been told, that shortly after my birth, you held to my scraggy lips the first silver boatful of — pap is so vulgar, of sponge-biscuit, reduced to a pulp; and a very fine, tall, straight, proper young woman you were, within ten days of saying good-by to nine-and-twenty.

Never mind, Jenny, you shall have the Don; that is, because the fates have decreed against my having him myself. I must shut my eyes to every man whose name begins with a *Z* you know, or perhaps you do not know. Lord, my dear, that was the only reason of my

chusing Arthur Bradshaw, Earl of Alford, just to get as far as possible from the fatal Z. Had, however, the alphabet been twisted round my matrimonial finger, why then it is clear that extremes would have met. Never fear, Jane, the Don may be your's ; but I should like to see him first.

I was half crazy to see Buonaparte, when a peace was clapped up to gratify my wishes, and I sprung from a sick bed, shaking off my nerves with my nightcap, and flew off to Paris. Should I ever come to Teneriffe, which, believe me, I never shall, it will be for the sole purpose of seeing the Spaniard ; then will I mar your proud hopes, my dear Jenny ! What excellent foils we shall be to each other. From between such a brace of widows I defy him to escape ; for should he slight the demure lady in the lobster, (you, Jane,) he falls a prey to the fascinating mermaid.

How lucky that Eliot is not a married man, or this Don were a dangerous inmate : he has lived at every civilised, and uncivil court of Europe, I under-

stand ; and, I have no doubt, has been the Cicisbeo to every civil husband's wife in Italy, France, &c. Now, that class of beings I — do — ab-hor. Give me an acknowledged matrimonial suitor, or a husband at once ; but none of that obsequious, dangling foolery, which, I believe, is the cause of more evil on the continent than we are aware of.— I remember, when a wild girl, being horribly lectured by an old fright of a virgin, all parchment and stilts, for saying that a Cicisbeo was the devil ; and not content with this unlady-like expression, I clinched my offence, by adding, “ Why, Satan was the Cicisbeo of Eve ; read your Milton else.” — No, my pen is certainly bewitched this day ; but what wonder, when writing on a bewitching subject.

So to return to the subject of the greatest bore in nature, education ; do you and Eliot intend Claudio to learn Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, and Hindoostanee? the modern languages to come in by way of a dance, and a song between the acts. — Don will make an excellent master in most of these, and

no fear of a second edition of St. Preux and Julie, for by the time the pupil has learned to construe *Amo*, the preceptor will be putting off his shoes to step into his winding sheet.

Have you a dancing-master in your part of the world? Are the Capriotes (fine-feathered songsters I am told with you) to be her only singing-masters? — Eliot will himself teach her to draw, I conclude; and then follow botany, chemistry, astronomy, astrology, and *etceteras* as long as a comet's tail. — Heaven help the unfortunate prodigy of the little island, who, I suppose, will be sent over in a few years to astonish us of the great island.

Your children, Jane, I have heard, were wonders in their way; what a pity it was they died, and just at a time when you might have looked to the reward of their labours, and your own solicitude. — Lady Augusta R—— says she often regrets them, — misses them very much at her parties. The astonishing proficiency of your Mary in music, and Edward's early skill in languages, are still

the universal themes of panegyric.—A friend of mine was speaking of them the other day to a gentleman who seemed to doubt his assertion, that their acquirements far surpassed all he had witnessed in young people of their age. The hearer grew unaccountably dull, and changed the subject with a deep sigh, which of course I at that time attributed to his sorrow at their early death; but I have since heard he had a son, equally clever with your own, who died of over-study.

Well, sister, and what news shall I send you in return for all the Teneriffe news brought us by the divine and the Doctor?—I had nearly written the divine doctor! two words which ought never to come together when speaking of honest H—, who has nothing of clerical divinity about him, if we except his odious shovel hat;—that hat! that fright, which imparting to the face beneath it twenty years in age, gives the look of an owl, without adding one grain of wisdom to the head within.

Strayed from the subject again, by all that's rambling! What *was* the subject?

As to politics, it is for those who sit in the gallery, the pit, and the boxes, to chatter about the scene before them ; we, who either see behind the scenes, or into the green-room, smile and are silent.

Fashions, my love ! Shall I send you an account of the fashions ? or the fashions themselves ? say yes, and by the time they arrive at Teneriffe — Mother Shipton may wear them.

Well then, new publications ; but I know of none. I do certainly read *of* them in Reviews, but my only *study* is the Peerage, as my late lord's was the Racing Calendar.

What a different being is Louisa Clonmore ; and yet we were both brought up at the same school — I to be sure a high-flyer, she an humble bee.

The soil was the same, but what a variety in the plants. — Louisa possessing most of my accomplishments, though not in so transcendant a degree, (what signifies mock modesty with you ?) joins all those solid ones which adorn my good sister ; by which Mrs. Clonmore is enabled to educate her children herself, with

little or no assistance, except that of their father.

Louisa flourished on the banks of the Thames a rose, I, a tulip. The rose was transplanted by the modest hand of an unbefriended clergyman, to bloom the mistress of his lowly thatched parsonage; I was selected by an earl, (not a Flemish earl, thank Heaven,) to captivate the eyes of a court. The lovely rose at this hour is adorned with beautiful buds of various growth, all promising to equal the mother in loveliness, whilst I, the titled high-prized tulip, rise from the earth on the single stalk, solitary and alone.

Heigho! my nerves are beginning to dance. Well, to return to Louisa, her children are certainly what are called fine children, handsome, strong, cheerful and good-tempered — all excepting a little boy named Dudley, of whom you may have heard speak; the measles have totally ruined his constitution; I don't pretend to argue in what manner, but the child is no longer the same, he has dwindled to a shadow within these last

two years. The parents flatter themselves they will be able to rear him to maturity ; but I know to the contrary : depend upon it, Dudley will never see one-and-twenty ; it is a broken bud, which nothing can restore, a sickly, delicate living plant, that drawls out in a puny voice, “ Yes, if you please,” and “ No, I thank you,” to every question put to him, and takes no interest whatever in any one thing that is daily passing before his eyes : I repeat, it is the bud of the rose half-decayed, hanging downward, withering on the stalk. — I think I could write famous pastorals — I have so true a turn for the pathetics, when I’ve a new conquest in view.

I am going to the ball to-night at the rooms. The — regiment of Hussars is quartered near, and I mean to do execution among those who will soon do execution enough in Spain. There is an old saying, “ We love the treason, but hate the traitor ;” now I confess to the reverse. I hate war, but love the soldier ; and yet a soldier’s wife I was ever determined

not to become. You may remark, that my dead-and-gone lord was colonel of the — ; but that does not prove him to have been a soldier.

He certainly did flourish a little in Holland some years ago, when that republican general, you know who I mean, — he, who afterwards went *into* the Temple in a way every one knew, and *quitted* the Temple (I mean his soul quitted it) in a way no one knew but himself. — His name begins with a P, that is all I can remember, except his civility to my good lord, to whom he used to send his high *profonde considération*, saying, Not to hurry your *march* inconveniently, Colonel, I beg leave to inform you, that *I* intend, by such an hour, (naming it,) to occupy the town *you* now occupy. — Here was republican politeness ! would a Bourbon have thus acted, or even had such promised, could such have kept their word.

Got into politics again, I declare ! No, there I'm wrong, the word politics we confine to the recording of passing events, — the newspaper reports of the day : —

let old Time put ten years' gazettes in his portfolio, and they constitute History. And am I turned Historian! is it possible that I can write half a page of history! what neither governess, teachers, or masters of elocution and belles lettres, could ever obtain from me, during the three years they had me under their thumb-screws, stocks, and iron neck-swings in the noble county of Middlesex.

Once more, and for the last time, (on this page at least, for I'm nearly at the end of it,) to return to the never-ending subject of our letters, thoughts, and conversation,—Claudy, my little angel, who, now that she is a thousand miles off, an infant Andromeda chained to a rock in the sea by a cruel father, (I do peep into Samuel Boyse's entertaining Pantheon now and then,) I love better than ever.—She will receive by the next fleet that touches at Madeira, from whence you can send your luggage-boat for it, a set of china from Staffordshire, which, if she breaks a hundred times, shall be as often replaced; for though I do not positively declare she will be

my heiress (must look about me a little longer first), I think very probable, unless, indeed — I hope Don — I wish the man had a Christian's name — Don Zulvago, I hope *he* does not wear a wig, like my old beau the Doctor ; if he does, though he were the fire-king himself, the monarch of Teneriffe, I would not be his queen ; I could not endure even a seraph in a wig. I have so great an aversion to a bald head, that my chief dread of a fever is the sight of a phantom opening my curtains, with a blister and a pair of shears in one hand, and a wig in the other.

I assure you, Jane, old Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, could not boast of a finer flaxen head — no, a finer head of flaxen hair — than your killing sister Caroline ; and yet, that noble scold cut off her commanding tresses, and threw them in the face of the conqueror of Blenheim, as Lord Orford has it in his Reminis — a deuced hard word, and I've no dictionary at hand ; a very entertaining book, by the by, over which Alford has often fallen asleep with his two legs

(he had *two*, and fine ones) crossed, and resting on the chimney-piece, while his head and shoulders have been comfortably pillow'd in an easy chair.

And is it really easier to subdue thousands in battle, than one woman's spirit ! Louis Quatorze said it was, and we must allow him, poor man, to have been some judge : unable to keep the peace between the abandoned De Montespan, and the hypocrite De Maintenon (I detest that woman's character), he lifted up his perriwig, and stopping his royal ears, like Hogarth's enraged musician, swore it was easier to give peace to Europe, than to make two wrangling viragos hold their tongues. Poor Louis ! he was little aware at that time they were rivals, but whether from love to himself, or his crown and sceptre, let his death-bed scene witness.

And does my Claudio really promise to become a scold ! then, for Heaven's sake, Jane, have your own way, or adopt Clonmore's, and let the dark closet break her spirit, that her husband may not run the risk of breaking her neck, and a *certain* gentleman his.

Now do, my dear Jenny, write me a charming long letter, or I shall certainly exclaim — “Defend me from all torpedo’s flesh or fish!” Write to me, and soon, or take the consequence; for as I find that Eliot has ceased his correspondence with me, and I am aware that Claudio cannot as yet guide even a skewer, I shall certainly, on not hearing tidings of the exile and his family, desire my yacht to get under weigh and spread her canvass. — L’Amour taught “le premier navigateur” the use of sails, so Squire Gesner the Swiss says, in his charming Idylles, (this is to shew my reading,) and sisterly friendship will pilot me to Teneriffe.

Ever your enchanting
CAROLINE ALFORD.

LETTER XVII.

Mrs. Grantley to the Countess of Alford.

DEAR SISTER,

Euphorbia, Teneriffe.

You will no doubt be happy to hear we all continue in the best possible health: indeed, Eliot is so much improved in person and spirits since my arrival, that the picture at Oakland Park, I should think, can no longer be regarded as a resemblance. — I only wish that Claudio were a few years older, that she might begin seriously to occupy his attention, for, at present, she is only an object of amusement.

My niece reads words of *one* syllable tolerably, and has learned many phrases in the Spanish language, from Rosalva, a grand-daughter of Martella's, a young girl who cannot speak English, but whose good humour, innocence, pretty face

and person, and rather correct pronunciation, have made her a very desirable acquisition to us. The child required a companion of the age of this Rosalva, who could enter with spirit into all her little plays, both within doors and out, and, at the same time, prevent her coming to any bodily harm.

Claudy can also work at her needle, as you will see by the cambric handkerchief accompanying my letter. She can likewise form printed letters with a pencil, and dictate her thoughts to me with more intelligence than you might expect at her time of life.

The costly service of china of English manufacture, which you sent Claudio, is used at our afternoon's collation, and much admired in this part of the world, particularly by our Spanish guests.

By your account of Mrs. Clonmore, she must be an amiable woman : I regret I know so little of her, more especially as her husband, from what I have seen of him here, is a worthy man. I trust, with the blessing of the Almighty, they may never know what it

is to lose a child. Notwithstanding your unfavourable account of their little boy, he may yet recover, and I hope most sincerely that he will.

I am, my dear Caroline,

Your affectionate sister,

JANE GRANTLEY.

LETTER XVIII.

** Sir Eliot Howard to the Rev. Henry Clonmore.*

Euphorbia, Teneriffe.

ALL well with us ; but now to the principal purport of my letter. — Many years since, I was told, by one of our mutual friends, that you, my dear Clonmore, had been heard to declare, you never had regretted nature denying you a brother, since you had known *me*. — You, perhaps, forget having made use of these words ; nevertheless they were spoken, and *of me*, and by *you*. Dr. H— was my informer ; therefore all doubt on the subject is at rest.

From that period we have lived together like brothers indeed, at Eton, at college, and elsewhere, and yet upon terms of perfect equality ; for though my means far exceeded my wants, we were at par,

* Many letters are omitted.

by your moderation reducing your wants within your means.

When you accepted from my lost wife the living of Bloomfield, as having been held upwards of thirty years by your father, in preference to that which I offered, though treble its value, I applauded your conduct; and when you thought proper to reject that, and another benefice on my presentation, pluralities, and consequent non-residence, being against your sense of right, you may remember I did not persist: I listened to your arguments, I agreed to your objections, and disposed otherwise of my gifts.

Let me now remind you, Clonmore, of a few circumstances that occurred during our stay at Eton:— Three times were you in danger of drowning, when I saved you. I being then a strong athletic boy, and you weak and delicate, I more than once rescued you from T—, that tyrant of the school and neighbourhood. — And at Oxford, Clonmore; remember my conduct to you at Oxford. It is now my plan to lay all the obligations

you are under to me full before your eyes, that you may not have one solitary excuse for treating me with ingratitude. Search your own heart, for further, dearer proofs, of my former friendship, and then teach that heart, when now called upon, amply to reward me.

This is a solemn, a most extraordinary preface, you may remark. What more solemn can be the request itself! — Is Mrs. Clonmore with you whilst reading this? If not, lay by my letter; read no more: — do not cast your eyes upon another sentence until your wife shall be at your side, for the prayer I have to make is to you both jointly. Without her full and voluntary consent it cannot be granted; and I would rather trust for success to my own written pleadings, than any arguments you can hereafter propose to her.

The idea I am going to impart is no new one: it has long been cherished, even before your visit, two years ago, to this place; — it occupied my thoughts at that time, and has filled them ever since: it has been the dove of peace brooding

over my mind, — the finger of hope, pointing to a heart-soothing perspective.

To keep you no longer in suspense, Clonmore, Louisa, for I will suppose you now at the same time reading this together ; you have five sons, and I have none ; — your family may increase, mine is for ever at a stand. At the birth of Claudy, I did not repine ; I said, “ May my next prove a boy ;” and I looked forward to becoming the father of many children. In vain : my wife died, and my daughter remains my sole child.

Silence, Clonmore ! Harp no longer on that discordant string, it is hateful, agonizing to my ear. You, who knew Claudina, — you, to whom I, at the time, imparted every minute circumstance of our first acquaintance, (and every look and word is painted — painted ! engraved, deeply engraved, on my heart’s core, never, never to be obliterated,) — ought you to bait my ears with that common-place, hacknied advice, of — no, I cannot repeat the word. *I* marry again ! and whom ? and for what purpose ? For the sole chance, in the

Turkish style, of giving an heir to my title and estates ! No, no ; I love, I honour the sex too well to attempt branding them with *dishonour*, by offering a hand, when I have no longer affections, or even common regard to bestow ; and how I should scorn that woman who would accept my name and wealth on such terms ; and yet such alone are now mine to offer.

Pardon me, Clonmore, my mind was agitated ; I am now more calm. Claudy has just left me, after a visit of an hour, during which her incessant prattle, and restless vivacity, have had on me their usual magical effects. Since this dear child has been here, I have recovered a great portion of my original peace and cheerfulness ; and yet, like the infant Lama of Thibet, she is utterly unconscious of her power.

Her future welfare is, at present, the never-ceasing object of my thoughts ; and I verily believe my anxiety would be less, were I, instead of leaving her an

heiress, to be certain that poverty would be her lot. In the latter case, a serious and sober education, religious principles, early and thoroughly imbibed, preparing for rectitude of conduct, might bring her through the world with honour; whereas, the favourite child of fortune, to what temptations may she not be exposed, should she be, early in life, deprived of my protection.

I should not wish her to marry under twenty years of age, yet should feel miserable were celibacy her choice. You will allege, that, setting aside a pretty face, and fine person, which she promises in time to possess, her money will inspire a swarm of suitors, to endeavour at overcoming that resolution; and therein consists my fear.—As Zulvago once remarked, “ An heiress may be compared to a flying-fish, a defenceless, timid, harmless creature, who is, both in the air and the water, ever surrounded by enemies; if it escapes man, and the shark, it falls a victim to the bird of prey.”

My wife was an heiress, you may ob-

serve to me ; but, Clonmore, I am convinced her nature, at the same age, differed widely from that displayed at this time by my little daughter. Claudina was, as I was told, from her earliest childhood, ever gentle and mild, displeasure being shown by gravity, not by violence ; and yet her temper, likewise, was all openness and candour, and, at times, affectionately ardent.

Heaven itself is witness that neither of *us* loved through the medium of fortune ; for, as you, Clonmore, well know, at the moment I was resolved to make her mine, and present her to the world as Lady Howard, (and I was upwards of twenty years of age, it must be remarked,) I knew not she possessed money sufficient to buy a wedding gown ; and in the hour that she first whispered to her conscious bosom her preference of me to all the men she had hitherto seen, she was ignorant that I was master of a second coat.

To return, however, to the subject nearest my heart, and the chief inducement for my writing to you at this time.

The temper of Claudy, as we have daily proofs, is most violent and overbearing ; and her inclinations, we perceive, already tend to pride and self-sufficiency, which evils must be checked, my friend, and soon, or their growth will exceed all power of reform. Mrs. Grantley certainly could, and did awe her early childhood, but being now in her sixth year, every day makes the task more laborious ; for though we do our utmost to prevent it, surrounded as she is by courtiers in every shape, who anticipate her wishes, laugh at her whims, and obey her commands, Claudy is beginning to pride herself on the idea that she is the only child in the universe ; she forgets those she left behind in England, and since her coming here, has seen no other.

You may readily surmise, that my object now is to convince her that there *are* other children in the world, of equal value with herself, and of as much, or of more consequence, who are worthy to share with her that attention now wholly engrossed by her own little person,

on which the care and admiration of half a dozen persons, at least, is daily lavished. — It is thus only, that selfishness can be thoroughly eradicated from her mind, and vanity and conceit stifled in the birth.

My first idea was to adopt a little girl of her age, and rear them together as sisters, perhaps co-heiresses ; for even half my present fortune is too much for an individual, and that a female : but here, Clonmore, even at the very time I was meditating on the means of expelling selfishness from the breast of my child, *self* came into *my* consideration, and I reflected on the superior advantages and interest, the adoption of a boy instead of a girl might have on my own future life.

To adopt a son indeed — to be his father, preceptor, guardian, friend, — Clonmore, is Louisa now at your side ? are you reading this together ? — this, the only request I shall ever make you, the only reward I shall ever claim of your friendship. — Are you prepared to show how deeply you feel for my irreparable

loss? are you inclined, as far as lies in your power, to repair it? can you, will you give me one of your sons?

You can spare me one out of five, you can surely spare me one, my prayer is not so unreasonable, — Claudy herself will not be dearer to me, than a child of your's. I will be his father, and in my sister Grantley he will find the care and tenderness of a mother. If you consent, I promise to brush up my scholarship and follow your own plan of tuition, with as much docility as the veriest pedagogue living under your roof. And with Mrs. Clonmore, I make the engagement to let him visit England as often, and for any period she may wish to exact.

Can I say more? — can I make a stronger appeal to your friendship, your humanity, your justice? — if I could, believe me I would not hesitate to do so. Adieu! on your determination I rest my hopes of future happiness.

ELIOT HOWARD.

LETTER XIX.

The Rev. Henry Clonmore to Sir Eliot Howard.

Bloomfield Rectory.

NOT a moment will I keep my friend in suspense on the subject of his last letter. Louisa and I, as you surmised, did read it together, for it arrived about an hour since, when we were alone in her dressing room.

Our mutual observations on your offer, my dear and generous Howard, it is unnecessary to repeat; and now, for the sake of Heaven, do listen to me with patience: do not fly off in a paroxysm of rage, and destroy this my letter, at the early intimation I thus give of the state of our minds on reading your's; rather acknowledge, with your usual frankness and liberality of opinion, how unconquerable our objection to your prayer, as you term it, must be, when

we both exclaimed, at the very same moment, whilst the paper trembled in our hands, and we looked suddenly up at each other, as if in painful suspense of the feelings of each—think, I repeat, what must be the emotion of the instant, when we cried out in one voice, “God forbid.”

This speaks of itself; it was the cry of nature; the disinterested, involuntary sentence of the heart. You may think me unfeeling for not even endeavouring to sweeten this draught of disappointment, by thanks, by excuses, by promises of what the future might lead to. I offer none; let the future decide in its own time—our present resolution is this, had we twenty sons, we would not part with one.

And you would call our compliance with this last, this noblest offer of friendship, a favour done to yourself! Kind and good Eliot! would to God that —— But I have done, or I shall fancy I hear your voice echoing across the Atlantic with “*Silence, Clonmore.*”

Only suffer me to notice the remark

Louisa made but now. You will not be blunt with a lady, although she may chance to observe, “ The best compliment Sir Eliot could pay the memory of his wife, is to think the sex worthy of producing her counterpart. A man who had survived an *unfortunate* union, might feel averse to hazard a second — but our friend —” Well, I say no more ; however you may decide, it will be for the best.

In one of your former letters, and again in your last, you remind me that I am thoroughly acquainted with the particulars of your first introduction to Lady Howard. Now I assure you, my friend, upon my honour, I do not remember a single circumstance concerning it. I scarcely recollect when, where, or how you did meet ; and for this simple reason : at the very time you were detailing to me your newly-formed intimacy with your Claudina, I was, and I believe unknown to you, (not being secure of my prize,) courting my Louisa.

I can recall to mind your transports and incoherency, when relating to me those very important particulars ; and I

might unintentionally deceive you into the idea that I was listening with the most profound attention, by coming out with a “ Ha ! indeed ! well sir ? and so ? ” whilst my thoughts, instead of rambling with you into Devonshire, were in all likelihood basking in love’s sunshine at Twickenham.

You have declared you will never ask of either Louisa or myself a second proof of friendship ; but you have not forbidden us to ask such of you. Could we prevail on you to favour us with a sketch, however slight, of the events you allude to, the better to make us acquainted with the character of our honoured and lamented friend, the daughter of my father’s early patron, it would to us be invaluable. We have still the half-length portrait of Lady Howard, by Opie, in our drawing-room ; an account written by yourself of how the affections of so much excellence on both sides became mutually, and indeed, suddenly engaged, I repeat, Louisa and myself would regard as a real treasure.

Dr. H—— has been here; he is staying with a friend in the neighbourhood, at whose house Lady Alford is at present on a visit. Your letter was lying on the table; *sans ceremonie* he took it up in silence, read it, took off his spectacles, wiped them thoroughly, drew in his lips, and fixed his eyes on the window, put his spectacles on again, once more read the letter over attentively, and then took a pinch of snuff.

After a short silence, which neither Louisa nor I were inclined to break, the good gentleman observed, “ I see how this will end: that confounded fellow will go on lamenting his loss until his youth is frittered away; and when he becomes the “slippered pantaloon,” the first little Spanish girl with oblong eyes and castanets that comes across him, will dance her way into his notice, until she bears off the matrimonial ring. Such are the usual finales of extravagant and romantic resolutions.”

Though I have no fear of the castanets and oblong eyes, I must confess there is some truth in the Doctor’s remark; and,

my dear Howard, to argue with you in sober friendship, can we assert with perfect sincerity that there is the least rationality in this plan at your time of life of devoting the remainder of it to widowhood. As a Christian, I repeat, you ought to resign yourself, even with cheerfulness, to the will of Providence ; and as a member of society, its interests become your duty to improve. Can this be done more effectually, I ask, than by giving the world a family to perpetuate your virtues.

I waive all comment on your remark, that any woman who might consent to accept your wealth and title (dispensing with your regard) would be an object of your contempt ; as Louisa herself declares, in her generous ardour to do you that justice you deny to yourself, that there is scarcely a man on earth, in her opinion, to be preferred to yourself.

I proceed, in the next place, to the account you give us of Claudy :—it does not certainly bear a promising appearance ; but let me observe, that if it is really

your wish to remove your child from the dizzy pinnacle on which, I agree with Don Zulvago, heiresses usually *do* stand, you cannot carry your purpose under a better form, than by giving the saucy little beauty half-a-dozen brothers and sisters. Should, however, your own judgment ultimately decide against innovations of this nature, do not have recourse to adoption. Be patient; time, as you yourself observe, does glide much quicker than we are aware of. Claudio is at present a child, but a very few years hence, and we shall find her approaching to womanhood.

My eldest girl, who is now about six years of age, was seated the other day on a footstool at her mother's side, and in appearance wholly unoccupied. We at last observed her counting her fingers, each hand alternately, until she came to twenty-five, — there she stopped, and gave a deep sigh, “Twenty-five! Oh dear! and then I shall soon be an old woman!” — We laughed, and yet is there not more truth in the idea than at first appears? — From our birth to a

quarter of a century, we seem to *pursue* old age as he flies in the distance before us ; but at twenty-five, my friend, old age halts, and yet we proceed — he then turns slowly round, and at every step we make, he hastens to meet us.

This seems a levee-day with us. Dr. H—— was succeeded by Mr. Miles Cavendish, who came to take leave, being on the eve of his departure for Portsmouth to join his ship ; and now Lady Alford is just arrived. She and Louisa are gone up stairs to look over some new purchases, and have left me to finish my letter.

The Countess complains bitterly that you never write to her, and seems still indignant at the receipt of a *note*, as she calls it, upwards of a year and a half ago, from Mrs. Grantley, to inform her that Claudy knew E. from F. and could hem a pocket handkerchief. I asked at the time to see the note ; but she replied, that she wished to prove, whether it was the custom at Teneriffe to write on *asbestos* paper, and that the happy

experiment had procured it the fate it deserved.

When Claudio shall be able to handle a pen, or a pencil in any sort of fashion, do let her write to her aunt, who is certainly very fond of the child, and really takes your silence as most unkind. Your younger sister *is* a fashionable, I allow ; but still she has a heart, and a generous, and a feeling one ; it should not be unnecessarily pained by neglect : and though her letters are, I acknowledge, as flighty and whimsical as her conversation and behaviour, none of them, I trust, have the slightest tincture of unbecoming levity.

Her anxious curiosity respecting Zulvago still affords the highest amusement to Dr. H—— and myself ; and to keep it alive, it would actually appear we had connived in giving a contradictory description of him. I think I am the most accurate, as I took particular observation of his person ; but the Doctor, whether out of perverseness or forgetfulness, I do not know, does not agree with me in any one respect when speaking of

him. So that at last, out of all patience with us both, the Countess exclaimed, “ Well, this Spaniard must be a charming fellow: a very tall, short, middle-sized man; sufficiently corpulent, if he was not so thin: with fine black, sandy hair and beard, and blueish-brown eyes, which by the way must be green — a very sweet smirking frown upon his face; and a complexion as dark as nut-brown, though rosy and fair as a Swede.”

Apropos, I ought to inform you, that I have been applied to, in your absence, by several noble suitors, who are very desirous of becoming your brother-in-law. Cavendish I suspect amongst the rest; but his prospects in life do not authorise him as yet to speak out. The Countess’s birth, connections, vivacity, beauty, juvenile appearance, (so wholly devoid of art,) and last, not least, most excellent jointure, with the usual appendages of town house and country seat, equipages, plate, jewels, &c. render her no undesirable object of attention. Dr. H—— insists upon it, and has offered in her presence to lay a pot of coffee, that some

spark from Kilkenny, whose whole fortune will consist of his smart coat on credit, (no creditable suit,) will yet pay her home for all her flirtations, especially at his expense.

I, of course, referred the noble pretenders to the charming widow herself, who, however, seems in no great haste to part again with her liberty, for she laughs at one, rattles with another, takes summary leave of a third ; and as for the Honourable Miles Cavendish, she treats him like a school-boy, wonders at his assurance, desires him to wait for her seven years, and promises that, if at the end of that time she has found no one more to her fancy, she, perhaps, may descend to think of a cabin-boy, as she calls the young lieutenant.

Should Lady Alford, however, seriously change her mind, and accept the offers the Marquis of —— and Viscount —— have made her, I would advise you, Howard, to speak in time, and you may have a fair chance of being permitted to adopt a *nephew* or two.

Farewell, my friend ; that Heaven may
bless and prosper you and your's, is the
united daily wish of

HENRY and LOUISA CLONMORE.

LETTER XX.

Sir Eliot Howard to The Rev. Henry Clonmore.

Euphorbia, Teneriffe.

FRIVOLOUS and insulting man ! was this, this which now lies before me, was this an answer suited to the letter you received from me ? I wrote to you, my best feelings guiding my pen ; you seem to have written to me from the billiard-table.

It shall never be said you granted to compassion what you denied to friendship, or I would attempt to describe the sufferings of suspense I endured from the time of dispatching my letter to England, to the receiving of your's, — this, this death-blow to my hopes.

Had you seen me stretch out my hand to take it, my endeavour to break the seal, the cold agony that came over me when I read the first few lines — I

“ fly off in a paroxysm of rage !” No, no, such were not then the feelings that came over me. I sat down quiet and silent, the letter falling from my hand to the floor, my eyes resting on those two words, — words which decided my fate ; but though my sight was fixed on them, fixed stedfastly, my lips refused to pronounce those words ; — I did not, I cannot even now. — No, never will *I* say to that prayer of mine, “ *God forbid !* ”

And you deny me ! you both deny me the only request I ever did, or ever shall make either of you : “ *had you twenty sons, you could not spare me one !* ” this sentence I forgive, it escaped you, it was an oversight, it was not premeditated, although you applied it to him who had no son.

No, Clonmore, do not add deceit to cruelty ; this determination of not parting with any of your boys, is not owing to a repugnance to a separation, for part with them you must ; nay, you will rejoice so to do. Are they not destined for professions ? do not schools and colleges

await them? — regiments, men of war, India, and foreign counting-houses, yet look forward to receive them. No, I repeat, it is to me you will not confide a son—to me, whom you regard as incapable of the charge; the madman, the lunatic of Teneriffe. God help then my sister and my child, now wholly in my power, prisoners to my will; what must their situation be! — Well, be it so, I submit; yourself and wife have decided, and though the unexpected refusal has been a stab to hopes long and fondly cherished, I forgive you both,—and now we will drop the subject.

Your account of my sister Caroline's being sought for by many in a second marriage, does not surprise me: my only astonishment is that she has remained a widow thus long. May her choice, if she does make one, prove as fortunate as was her first, and the subject of it longer lived. — To be sincere with you, I wish she were married, as it would serve in a great measure to detach her from her dissipated mother-in-law, who, I am convinced, is the principal agent in her

schemes of running wild from one part of the country to another, and never being fixed in any place for more than a couple of months at a time.

Does Lady Alford show no sort of preference to any one of these suitors in particular? I should think that Viscount —, as a steady middle-aged man, of sound principles and good understanding, might have the best chance; his nobler rival, I suspect, is rather involved in speculations of some nature or other; and with respect to Cavendish, he being as young, as volatile, and thoughtless as herself, I hope he may not succeed; otherwise his family and character are unexceptionable.

Mrs. Grantley continues the same excellent creature as ever; not a shadow of change have I seen in her, except at the reading of Lady Alford's last letter, received long since; she wept over that without controul, but as she did not offer to show it to me, I could only respect her sorrows and be silent. I am aware that it is in Caroline's power to make me smile; but I knew not she possessed

sufficient influence over Jane to cause her to shed one tear ; unless, indeed, as I suspect, she referred in her letter to Mrs. Grantley's deceased children.

I shall write to Caroline by this conveyance, and acquaint her that Claudy will soon commence a correspondence, as her aunt is assisting her to compose a famous epistle formed of printed letters of various shapes and sizes.

And you tell me, Clonmore, you neither recollect when, where, or how Claudina and I first met ; and yet the circumstances that attended our acquaintance, were sufficiently striking, and indeed romantic, to engage the attention of any young man, — a man in love excepted.

On looking back, I do find that that was the period of your own courtship, and therefore acquit you of all finesse in endeavouring to prevail on me to relieve my mind by relating past, and not uninteresting occurrences, even were they to meet the eye of a stranger.

The task to me will be no difficulty, I have it *by heart*, even to the most minute particular ; it has long been the subject of my daily retrospection, it will occupy my thoughts to the verge of the grave.

You remember the spring of 17— (need I doubt your and your Louisa's remembrance of it), when you hastily quitted Oxford for the North, to attend your dying grandfather, and take possession of your first curacy ; and I, bent on a frolic and a pilgrimage, walked off alone for the South of England, neither annoyed by spies in the shape of servants, or bound in trammels by fellow travellers, calling themselves a party of pleasure.

No doubt you forget, at the instant of our separation in High-street, your thrusting your head out of the chaise window, and calling after me to put on a better coat, or I should be taken for a strolling player ; and my answer, that my well-shaped shining hat, and fashionable boots, would speak to the contrary. Away you rolled, covering me with a

cloud of dust; whilst I, exhilarated by the morning air, shouldered my fowling-piece, whistled for Rover my spaniel, and briskly set off, in my pocket a pair of pistols, and my purse enriched with about forty shillings. Determined not to hazard my safety by taking more money with me, I had previously arranged a method of receiving at the provincial towns I should pass through, sufficient to complete my southern tour; and from the danger of footpads and highwaymen, I trusted to my fire-arms.

The morning of our parting was serene and delightful, though, I suppose, even of that you have no recollection. I walked on with a feeling of independence and enjoyment never experienced in any sort of carriage, or even on horseback, and the first day had travelled nearly eighteen miles.

On arriving at B—, I sauntered into the Rose and Crown Inn, asked whether the mail-coach had left a portmanteau for a *Mr. Eliot*; received at first an impertinent stare from head to foot, as the reception due to a trumper, and then an

officious, “ Yes sir, yes, walk in sir, pray,” &c. challenged, I suppose, by my college tone of voice, and Oxonian mode of carrying my head and limbs, which certainly possess that decisive superiority that quickly changes insult to respect.

In imitation of princes and other potentates, I assumed the travelling designation of “ *Mr. Eliot*,” in preference to substituting a false one, as it equally prevented my being known, and still was in fact my real name. Thus from day to day, from stage to stage, I travelled on with new delight, and without the smallest molestation reached S—, within a few miles of Honiton in Devonshire.

Pleased and interested by the new and various scenes this place presented, I determined to spend a longer time here than I had hitherto done in any preceding village; and having taken up my quarters at the sign of the Plough, and rested half an hour, I ordered dinner and sauntered across a common, where were several children at play, and from thence to the turnpike road.

An equipage now and then, or a few

equestrians, a mail and a stage coach, waggons and market carts, passed me in rapid succession, as I sat upon a log of timber near the road; but to none of them did I pay the slightest attention. A favourite author, generally Cervantes in the original, or my sketch-book and pencil, gave me an appearance of occupation, which I occasionally varied by handling my fowling-piece and powder-horn, when attempting to shoot sparrows.

One of my favourite amusements was visiting the church-yard, and reading the epitaphs, many of which afforded me a hearty laugh. Amongst the rest were two, which from their profound stupidity greatly pleased me; these I read aloud several times, and repeated so often for many days afterwards, that I remember them both to this hour.

“ Alas ! no more I could survive,
For I is dead, and not alive :
And thee in time, no longer shalt survive,
But be as dead as any mon alive.”

The other ran thus :

“ Here lies I, no wonder Ise dead,
For a broad-wheeled waggon went over mine head.”

I might have had the grace to restrain my mirth, had I known there were two spies in the shape of little boys behind me playing at marbles, and watching my strange behaviour ; but I did not perceive them, until I heard one whisper aloud to the other, in the broad Devonshire dialect, which I can neither write nor imitate — “ He’s laughing at our great-grandfather.”

This recalled me to propriety, and I turned from the tomb-stone to look in at the windows of the church, (for the door was locked,) and make the circuit of the walls ; an expedition which took me about two seconds and a half ; and I thus came again to the spot where the little clowns were still at play.

I was on the point of asking them could they not find a more proper place for their game than the church-yard, when I recollect ed they might answer me by this question — “ And could you not find a more proper object to laugh at than the tomb-stones of the dead ? ” — Leaving them to the correction of their pastor and his clerk, I was quitting

the spot, when the elder of the two, stopping suddenly in his play, the marble poised on his fore-finger, and the knuckle of the thumb ready to shoot, looked up, and, without a touch of his hat, or a “ Pray,” or a “ Sir,” bawled after me, “ What’s o’clock ?” In the same tone of voice and dialect, I called out, “ Past twelve :” and at that instant I heard, and close to me, (but whence it proceeded, or from whom, although I looked, after the first astonishment was over, above, below, and around, I was totally incapable of finding out,) I heard the sweet and playful sound of a female laugh, without a doubt occasioned by the ludicrous manner of my reply to the boy.

A low wall, covered with ivy, divided the church-yard from a field where a cow and a horse were grazing. I looked over it, and on all sides, but no one was visible ; and I remained for some time standing on the same spot, anxious to hear the sound again, but it came no more.

You, Clonmore, can have no idea of the impression it made on my fancy ; it was like what we may suppose the free and charming voice of Ariel when invisible, the young, the prolonged, and jocund laugh of a sylph, and seemed to come direct from the heart.

Surprised and disappointed, I turned to make some enquiry of the boys, but eagerly and rapidly they were pocketing their marbles, it being past their school hour, as I supposed ; and deaf to all my commands that they would stop and answer me, away they scampered over the graves, and out at a little gate near the entrance of the church-yard, disputing at every step they went, each accusing the other of having pocketed more than his share.

Slowly, and often looking back, I quitted the place, and walked towards a cluster of cottages, or rather mud hovels, which however bore a clean and cheerful appearance, from the outside being white-washed, and the thatch covered with a coat of bright-green moss. Each stood in its own little garden territory,

and was shaded by one or more apple, pear, or cherry trees, at that time in full blossom. I sat down on a bank near one of these, and listened with delight to the song of the wild goldfinch, and watched a lark singing and soaring in the deep-blue sky ; until the sun becoming oppressive, I was glad to seek the shade of one of the cottages.

Here, leaning over the half-door, which was bolted on the inside, I for some time watched what was going on within. About twenty girls, from five years of age to fourteen or fifteen, were seated behind each other, intent on their little lace pillows. Their uniformly meagre, sickly, and dejected appearance, struck me at first with surprise ; for I had not then learned to attribute it to their being for so many hours pent up in a small, low-roofed, dark, close, and smoky hole. As I examined, with compassion, the wretched countenances of these infant manufacturers, I could not help wishing that they were all let loose, to enjoy full exercise and liberty, and the free bless-

ings of nature, equally with the cherry blossom, the goldfinch, and the lark.

As my presence, of course, had attracted their attention, I thought it necessary to speak ; and I asked the child nearest to me, who seemed to be about six years of age, would she sell me a few yards of her lace to trim my night-caps. At this most singular question the little girls looked askance at each other, and held down their heads, in vain trying to suppress a tittering laugh, whilst the elder scholars of this lace school smiled, or looked grave, or coloured, or affected not to hear me, as the emotion of the instant prompted. The bobbins seemed, however, to rattle faster than usual, and the thread to be uncommonly inclined to break, — very ominous symptoms of inattention. Presently, however, the girls were recalled to order and decorum, by a sharp, cracked voice, proceeding from the chimney corner, that of their mistress, as I supposed, for she was not visible from the door where I stood. Having amused myself, for some time, by sly winks and

nods to the children, I threw a few shillings into the lap of the little girl to whom I had spoken ; and then, afraid of being the cause of their incurring further displeasure, for an appearance of insubordination was rising among them on the sight of the money, I quitted the spot, and continued my walk.

About a quarter of a mile further I came to a place I had not before visited : it was a wide, level green, the grass of which was as short, as smooth, and soft as velvet, dotted here and there with furze bushes, covered with their brightest blossoms. At the further end stood, detached, a low, wide cottage, the slanting roof of which, much deeper than the walls were high, was entirely spread with moss of the most luxuriant colour. On one side grew, in clustering profusion, dark and variegated ivy, climbing over the top of the tall chimney ; and on the other, and behind it, bloomed an apple orchard, the rich white and red blossoms being at this time in full perfection.

The whole view, with the distant prospect behind it of every thing that

constitutes beauty in landscape, hill, valley, wood and water, with the sea in the back-ground, being really a subject worthy of the pencil, and I, as you must acknowledge, no despicable draughtsman, I took out my sketch-book, and having chosen my position, sat down upon the stump of a tree, and made a tolerable drawing.

Whilst touching and retouching my performance, admiring and improving it, I said aloud, “ What a sweet place for a few months’ solitary retirement, supposing for myself and a fellow collegian. What an admirable spot for study; such peace, such serenity, such harmony.”

The words were scarcely pronounced, than my ears were assailed by the loudest and most horrible discordance I had ever heard, — and proceeding from this very identical cottage of harmony and peace. I listened; the noise died away to a sort of mingled buzz, like that issuing from a nest of hornets, and was succeeded by a low murmur, which ended once more in profound silence. — I need not

inform you that this was the village school.

I put my drawing in my pocket ; and resolving, like a wise and intelligent traveller, to see all that was to be seen, sauntered towards the open door. Here I beheld about fifty children, of both sexes, and every age, some sitting on benches, others in groups, and all variously employed.

Beside a venerable dame stood a little boy, reading aloud, whose figure caught my attention. His face was a deep brown, and his hair a silver white : his red jacket, much too tight for his robust upper limbs, had worked its way to his chest : his *buckskins*, as much too large for him, hung about his lower limbs, displaying a large roll of check shirt between the two articles of dress ; whilst his scarlet legs were just seen between his knee and his worsted stockings, one of which fell over his thick nailed shoe and little brass buckles. It was plain that this rural urchin could dispense with both braces and garters.

At sight of me the lecture stopped, and he turned, with a grin, to the respectable personage at whose elbow he stood, which action drew my attention towards her. The brown stuff gown, with sleeves just covering the elbows, the check apron, clean white handkerchief, covered with another of black silk, the mob cap, and grey hair neatly combed over the forehead, the leaden-mounted spectacles, and half-knit stocking with three needles employed, and one stuck in the apron string, whilst the kitten played at her feet with a ball of worsted on the sanded floor, at which the conscious mischief-loving children laughed, reminded me of —. But there, Clonmore, read every description of village school-mistresses, from Shenstone downwards, and you may form an idea of old Dame Withers.

On observing me, for when the boy stopped reading she looked up at him, and followed his eyes to the door, she took off her spectacles, and with a mild and benevolent voice, asked me to walk in, and desired the lad to place a chair

for me. Her graciousness called forth mine ; and, contrary to my sad behaviour at the lace school, I here apologized for my intrusion, and was turning away, when she entreated me to come in, saying a great many of the gentry came there to see how the little lads and maids improved in their learning.

I fully understood the meaning of this hint ; therefore felt my pocket with one hand, whilst I took off my hat with the other, and accepted the seat offered me by a little girl, who, having first dusted it with her apron, threw me a smile, and dropped me a courtsey.

The room being spacious, and the door and windows open, I did not feel the heat oppressive ; but yet, I drew my chair as near the entrance as possible, that I might make my retreat when I should think proper. — This I was very soon on the point of doing, for the strong dialect, to me scarcely intelligible, and a nasal twang that was most horrible, joined to their invincible stupidity and dulness, made me feel so weary in body and spirits, that in less than ten minutes,

taking advantage of a dead silence, I started up, and, slipping a silver token of personal remembrance into the good woman's hand, and laying on the little round claw-table at her side, a piece of silver paper, towards the benefit of the school, I was going away in haste, when —

O Clonmore! now is come the hour,— until now, I have been repeating prologues to your ear,— the eventful play of life, or rather of the best passions of our nature, is now begun ; I touch at the moment, when my heart, for the first time, beat with strong uncontrollable emotion.

The voice I now heard came over my senses like the unexpected sound of an Eolian harp in the dead of night, when the storm is hushed to peace. I could not be mistaken, nor was I ; I felt internal conviction that the sudden laugh of the invisible Ariel, of the hidden sylph, which I had heard in the church-yard, and the voice that now spoke, was music proceeding from the same lips.

At the farther end of the room I had already distinguished a group of boys standing in class ; but on the supposition that they surrounded a comely old lady, the counterpart of her I had before my eyes, my curiosity, I confess, did not lead me a step farther than where I had placed my chair. — The sentence spoken was simply this :

“ You are not attentive, James, spell that word again.”

But the tone, the manner, Clonmore, the accent, — whether it proceeded from the powerful contrast to the dissonance to which I had long been listening, I did not then enquire, but in my life I had never heard a voice of more mellow sweetness, more softened elegance, and grace.

As you may suppose, I instantly stopped, turned, and gently approached the class. On looking over the boys' heads, I could certainly distinguish a female figure, but that was all — she was sitting in a very low high-backed chair, and had on a coarse straw bonnet with so tremendous a poke, that as she held

down her head, looking at the book on her knee, I could not obtain the slightest glimpse of her face ; add to which, the part of the room where she sat was dark, and that the children stood in a half-circle close before her.

The hopeful James was easily distinguished from his companions by his downcast foolish face, whilst the rest of the boys were alternately looking at him, and then up at me, with a half smile. I laid my hand on his shoulder, and looking over at his features, distinguished my church-yard friend : — Oh, oh ! thought I, if “ What’s o’clock ? ” had been conning his lesson instead of playing at marbles, this disgrace had been averted ; but in that case, I should never have heard either the bewitching laugh, or the still more bewitching speaking voice. He has been unconsciously a friend to me, and I’ll now stand his friend.

“ So my fine fellow, you seem a bright scholar ; why we shall see you clerk of the parish in time, if you go on in this style.— Pray, ma’am, what is the word he can’t spell ? ” Of course had the female

answered me, she must in common civility have looked up ; but before she possibly had time to do this, an officious young rogue at the bottom of the class called out the word. I then in a whisper spelt it to James, but either he had not the cleverness to catch the letters, or he had too much honour to take advantage of my partiality, for there he stood an unmoved block of clownishness.

“ James has lost his place,” said again the sweet voice, whose modulation and tones were most perfect ; “ he has fairly lost it, do you take it, Richard.” The boys exchanged places, and the lesson went on without farther interruption, during which, not for one instant was the insufferable poke bonnet raised, whereby a feature could be seen.

Rather cooled and disgusted by this rustic parade of prudery, yet still enchanted by the voice, and now convinced, from the figure, that it was that of a very young person ; I again clapped James on the shoulder, and slipping half-a-crown into each of his hands, as he held them behind him, said, “ There, young

dunderhead, there's to buy marbles ; but never let me catch you gambling in the church-yard again."

I paused a moment, my eyes fixed on the bonnet, to watch for the smallest sign of recognition, or secret understanding ; but perceiving none, I turned off with real indifference as I imagined, and quitted the house, saying in my own mind, (referring to the supposed condition of the young person,) " A daughter, or niece, of the old woman, perhaps, or a girl hired to assist in the school ; as such, considering who and what *I* am, it might be prejudicial to her, my making the slightest enquiry as to who or what *she* is. — Charming voice though, and not unlike that of Mrs. Jordan in the Country Girl. — I wonder whether she sings."

Now, Clonmore, you and I are well convinced that very few of our Oxonians or Cantabs, but would have lingered near this cottage to question the children, or persist in seeing the face hidden by the bonnet ; but I was as yet not sufficiently in love, to forget that my dinner was

waiting for me at the inn—add to which, in proportion as I distanced the place of temptation, the object of it became fainter, and by the time I was seated in my little parlour dissecting a fowl, many good resolutions were formed ; amongst others, that I would neither visit the church-yard nor the school again, but continue my peregrinations to the coast.

Sir Eliot in continuation.

I kept my determination ; and the next day, accompanied by Rover, quitted my inn (having given orders concerning the forwarding my portmanteau) and walked upwards of eight miles, totally regardless of a heavy rain, by which the roads were rendered almost impassable. A distant village spire was my direction, and on consulting my map, I determined to make it my next bathing place. Under the idea of gaining it sooner by a short cut across the fields, I quitted the turnpike road, and struck at once into them ; the two or three first of which offered a

tolerable firm footing ; but at length I found myself in a newly-ploughed field, where I sunk at every step deep into the wet furrows, dragging each foot after me heavily laden with clumps of earth : thus sliding and slipping as I walked, I reached a turnip inclosure, across which lay a beaten path, on one side a gate, and a narrow gravel road leading to a thick hazel copse.

Here I stopped to scrape the lumps of wet clay from my boots, to take off my shooting jacket, which I had put on that day instead of my dusty black coat, to shake from it the rain drops that had fallen from the trees as I passed under them, and to rub the moisture from my fowling-piece.— The shower was over ; and the sun now shining with heat and brilliancy, I sat down on the top of the gate, admiring a fine effect of sunshine on the distant hills and heavy rolling clouds in the horizon.

My thoughts were at first wholly engrossed by the present scene, but by degrees they wandered back to the village I had quitted, perhaps, for ever,

I took out my watch, and having looked at the hour, kept swinging the chain in my hand, whilst beating time with the heel of my boot on the bars of the gate, as one leg lay across the top, and the other hung down, when I heard a voice behind me say, “ Will you give me leave to pass ? ”

To turn round, to leap from the gate, to hold it open, to touch my hat, was the work of an instant. The speaker was a young female, wrapped in a long red and green plaid ; a deep straw bonnet was tied down with a black ribbon, and her face concealed by a green crape veil ; in one hand she carried a small bundle, and in the other a basket.

She passed through the gate with a slight bow of thanks, and I let it slip from my hand, when it closed with a loud noise. As you may conjecture, the voice alone convinced me, however unaccountable her present appearance at the distance of eight miles from the place I had quitted, that this was no other than my village school-mistress. Hastily recollecting myself, I followed her, remarking

that the sky threatened another shower, and asking could I procure her an umbrella, or carry her bundle and basket, (an offer I do not think I should have made in the environs of Oxford.)

She, however, declined all my civilities, saying she was only going to the cottage yonder at the end of the field, (an habitation I had not before observed,) and wished me good morning. Fortunately, however, for me, she had not gone a hundred yards, when the path sloping downward, she slipped, and in endeavouring to recover herself, let fall the basket (which, by its contents, I conjectured to be her dinner) and her bundle, both in the mud. The wind was now high, the plaid entangled her steps, and the veil perplexed her sight and caught in the hedges, when my assistance becoming absolutely indispensable, I most willingly offered it.

To my surprise, instead of showing the least degree of vexation, or rustic shame at this untoward accident, she laughed at it, and, with what emotion you may imagine, I heard again that

same “*jocund and prolonged laugh*,” which had in the church-yard struck my ear with such genuine pleasure. Calling to my dog, (after a “What’s his name?” to me,) “Rover, Rover! here, poor fellow,” she made him eat up the remains of cold meat and bread that lay scattered in the path, and on the grass around us, observing, as she took her bundle from me, “*This* is the most unlucky part of my adventure; this fine new dress, all my notable work, is quite soiled. — What a succession of accidents I have met with to-day — it has been to me truly unfortunate.”

The rest of the speech was apparently in character; but the words *succession* and *truly* jarred my feelings: they were fine words, or rather they were too professional, and immediately placed before me the humble country school-mistress, whilst the mention of *new dress* and *notable work*, suggested the idea, that to her occupation of teacher, was added that of village mantua-maker, or sempstress, in order to increase the means

already derived from following an honest livelihood.

Under these new impressions, and, I frankly acknowledge, encouraged by her own vivacity, I ventured to remark, “ You call this day unfortunate, *my dear*, whilst to me it has appeared most superlatively happy.” I was resolved also, on my part, to introduce a fine word or two.

I wish, Clonmore, I could give you the slightest conception of the instantaneous effect produced by this speech of mine. She stood in a suspended attitude a moment; her figure, perhaps unconsciously, assuming one in which I could trace a heightened stature, a graceful retreat of person, and a sort of elegant air, that, however, at once said, and in pretty plain English, “ You are now become very familiar and impudent, whoever you are; and so good morning to you.”

Le premier pas was over, therefore I did not hesitate to take the second. I went suddenly past her, and stretching out my arms, as if obstructing her way,

though, as I kept walking backwards, I in reality did not touch her, smiled, saying, “ You do not pass me, my charming girl, until you consent to lean upon my arm as far as your cottage, for, as you have already proved, it is impossible to walk thither unassisted.”

At that instant, by a sudden gust of wind, her bonnet blew back, and her veil came off, her plaid flew widely open, and her whole person, (clad in white,) from head to foot, was presented to my astonished eyes. True, I expected, and I know not particularly why, a pretty rustic face, perhaps a little sunburnt or so, with shining red cheeks, and round black eyes, full of animation and pleasure, though pretending otherwise, at my attention and implied flattery ; but here I beheld — Oh, the sensations I experienced at that moment, are never, never to be forgotten !

Here were features, with which, when painting, an artist might have become enamoured ; a look and expression he might have given the angel, “ severe in youthful beauty.” Here was the finest

shaped head, the most luxuriant glossy hair, I had ever seen ; the form, the figure, the attitude, all was matchless grace. — She stood before me, within a yard or two, (her eyes filled with gravity, yet sweetness, fixed full on mine,) the breathing statue of beauty unparalleled, beauty in its first bloom — all harmony, majesty, and love.

I've lost her ! she's gone ! for ever gone ! There still hangs her picture ; such as she was at that precise hour ; such as, for a few years, she blessed me ; such as I shall never behold again : that look, that very look, at once tender and reproachful, now meets mine. The soul of each, at the very instant I have described, seemed to dart towards the other, as if saying, (according to the beautiful hypothesis of a celebrated writer,) " We twain are one spirit, we parted in heaven, and now meet for the first time on earth."

Pardon me, Clonmore, these digressions, the sad wanderings of a deeply-wounded mind, which, whilst looking at the past, cannot refrain a murmur at the present, or check a hasty expression of

despair, at the prospect held out of the dreary future.

The effect this sudden apparition of exquisite loveliness, whose colour was heightened by exercise, and improved by an expression of sensibility I could not *then* account for, was magical. I felt a chill, an awe, an astonishment, that prevented speech; and, stepping back out of the path, I suffered her to pass in silence, and watched her until she disappeared at the cottage door.

For some time I lingered in the field; but not perceiving the appearance of any intention on her part to be seen again, I continued my walk towards the village, found out the principal inn, gave my orders to the landlord, returned to an early supper, and went to sleep, still perplexed to account for the young stranger being at so great a distance from the village where I had first seen her, and not able to decide as to which was really her residence, the school at S—, or this retired cottage, eight miles farther on the Dorsetshire road.

The next day was Sunday, and having resumed my black coat, newly brushed, and my fashionable boots, newly mended, I rose early, returned to the village I had quitted, and joined the congregation, already assembled in the parish church. At my entrance I looked about for the clerk, and he not being in the way, I, of my own accord, stepped into an empty pew, hung round with green silk curtains. Here I was searching for a prayer-book, and in vain, for they were all locked up in a drawer in the seat, when the clerk appeared, and accommodated me ; on which I observed, I hoped I had not intruded.

“ Oh no, sir,” he replied ; “ you are very welcome to sit in it ; for I dare say, as the old lady is ill, none of the family will be here to-day.”

Thus satisfied, I, with perfect unconcern, took possession, and began looking out the psalms : the church filled, the clergyman came in, and the service began. He was reading the absolution, when the door of my pew was opened, and a female figure glided in, drew a

hassock towards her, and took her place near the entrance.

Had I been, at that moment, in any other place than a church, I should immediately have apologized for my intrusion ; but, as I consider such ceremonies in the house of God as unnecessary, not to say improper and indecorous, I remained during the service, wholly devoting my attention to the duty of my Creator.

The sermon over, I turned round to observe the person who had shared my pew ; and as she was quitting it, had no difficulty in recognizing my lovely acquaintance, though the straw bonnet, and green gauze veil, were exchanged for a deep black mourning bonnet.

A new impression now formed itself on my imagination, when, being once more alone, I sat ruminating in the little Gothic porch. “ My lady is ill ! ” I said, repeating the words of the clerk, and this young person came into the pew as one of the family, — perhaps a relation : but then the school, and her trudging eight miles through rain and mud, and the basket of work,

and the bundle of cold provisions: no, that is not in character. Perhaps, — and the mortifying idea made no small revolution in my mind, — perhaps a lady's maid, sitting in the pew in the absence of her mistress. Well, even so, whatsoever, or whomsoever she may be, she is the most perfect beauty my eyes ever beheld, and has the sweetest voice I ever heard.

Thus, like Sir Roger de Coverley, and his fine widow, and her lovely hand, I concluded every sentence of doubt as to the situation this young woman held in society; for as to the rank in which nature had placed her, of that there was no doubt, it was one of decisive superiority over every woman I had hitherto seen. I rose, and, still deep in thought, walked back again the eight miles, and returned to my inn.

About ten o'clock the next day, I was standing at the door, in conversation with my landlord, whom I was determined to question as to the different families in the neighbourhood, when he should have concluded his expatia-

tions on a mare which he was persuading me to buy. Though my dress was now become thoroughly degraded, he, I suppose, went on the strength of my appearance as a gentleman, and asked forty guineas for the mare, for which, had her internal qualities agreed with her external, he ought to have asked a hundred.

As we were debating the subject, a travelling post-chariot, with one outrider, in a plain drab livery, drove up to the door to leave some message with the landlord, who hastily quitted me, and went to the chaise; whilst I, still standing on the same spot, mechanically looked at the heads of those within. The one was elderly, having the dignified air of a dowager duchess; the other youthful, and with great simplicity in her appearance. My eyes became rivetted on the face of the latter: it was herself; — our eyes met, and I received an almost imperceptible bow, which I as unconsciously returned.

A beggar stood at the door of the chaise, to whom, just before it drove off,

the young one threw a shilling; by which means I saw a white and delicate hand, tinged in the palm a bright and lively rose colour. On the third finger sparkled a ruby guard. I looked again, and steadfastly, when a death-like coldness ran through my veins, for I thought I also distinguished the marriage-ring. I felt however suddenly relieved, by observing that it was the right, and not the left hand, which I had been admiring.

No, I repeated, with firm conviction, that hand is not the hand of a menial: and again addressing the landlord, as he stood looking after the chaise, I asked whose it was.

“ It belongs to a Miss Powis,” he replied; and before I could put a second question, the London mail, followed by a stage-coach, arrived, and fully occupied his attention. Determined on getting all the information from him I possibly could respecting the object of my increasing curiosity, I again accosted him in the evening with a remark, that there were *two* ladies in the chaise, “ Who was the other?” I enquired.

“ The other !” he replied, with a sort of a careless, levelling air of contempt ; “ oh, the poor friend, I suppose, or companion, as it is called, I believe — something of that kind.”

“ And where does this Miss Powis live ?”

“ At S——, a few miles hence, not far from Honiton ; and is now going for some months to Sidmouth.”

So, thought I, as my landlord was called away from me, a few steps higher in life ; — my lady’s maid now turns out to be the companion of some rich old maid of quality, who might have had the grace to assume the title of *Mrs.* ten years ago, at least. This young beauty, then, is the humble dependant on wealth and old age, perhaps of whim and caprice ; in all probability, the child of a destitute clergyman, the orphan of a military or naval officer, but still the object of charity, and of the world’s commiseration. The lovely hand, and sweet voice, are now accounted for ; her skill in music being, no doubt, one of the requisites necessary to fill the situation,

wherein she is expected to sooth and amuse the mind of her employer.

I now clearly see the whole affair, I continued, debating in my own mind on probabilities. When I first saw her, she was deputed by her old lady to assist in the instruction of the village children, (perhaps the school itself a foundation of this ancient Miss;) and at our second interview, she was carrying the fruits of her own labour, and the offerings of her patroness's bounty, to some poor cottager. The carriage, perhaps, was waiting in the road, when she got out, and tripped across the fields, with her charitable donations. Her entrance into Miss Powis's pew at church was a matter of course; and equally so, her occupying the left-hand seat in the carriage of her benefactress.

And they are gone to Sidmouth! and for some months! That is a place I must see; — and, Clonmore, in less than four days afterwards I did see it. From the right-hand window of the York Hotel, I watched the variety of company on the parade; but seeing no face I had ever

seen before, I walked out, and down to the beach. As I now felt secure of meeting with the venerable dowager and her *protégée*, some time or other, I became perfectly indifferent *when* ; and yet, thought I, it may be as well to enquire where they live, or, unintentionally, I may stand staring at their very lodgings, or walk to and fro before them oftener than I otherwise should do.

Under this idea, I went the next morning into Wallis's library, entered into conversation with a shopman, and asked at once did he know where Miss Powis lived.

“ Miss Powis is gone,” he replied ; “ she took a house here for some months, on the Parade ; but gave it up, and went away yesterday.”

“ Gone !” I exclaimed, (and where was my indifference at that moment !)
“ And where is she gone ?”

“ Really, sir, I cannot inform you ; but you may know by enquiring at the Post-office.”

“ And where is the Post-office ?” — Though without waiting for an answer, on

observing the direction of his finger, I walked on with rapid strides, still enquiring as I pursued my way, yet scarcely stopping to gain the necessary information, until meeting with a stupid staring boy, without a hat, who was looking up in my face with a grin of wonder at something very unusual in my appearance, I gave him a push that nearly knocked him down, saying, “Don’t stand there, you little rascal, with your eyes and mouth wide open; but run on before, and show me the way to the Post-office.”

He did run, yet I overtook him; and in my haste had nearly overturned the stalls of fish, flesh, and fowl. With a loud rap of my stick on the wooden panel of the window, I summoned a girl, and called to her in the true Oxford word of command, “Ho! what’s the present direction of Miss Powis, who did live on the Parade, and went away yesterday?”

The girl stared, as if more at the vehemence of my manner, than from ignorance; and I was on the point of taking

notice of her ill-timed consternation, when a man's loud voice answered from within, “ The Post-office, Exeter, for one week only.”

I returned to my hotel, ordered a chaise and four, threw my portmanteau and myself upon the seat, chucked in Rover, satisfied the master of the hotel, in a manner that made him nearly bow his head off with thanks, and wishes for a safe journey, and dashed from the door.

You will now, and with truth, pass judgment upon me, Clonmore, and say, “ His hour is come, he *is* in love.”

On arriving at Exeter, I quitted the chaise, desiring the postillions to put up at the principal inn, and went on to the Post-office, where, having assured myself not only of Miss Powis's being within the city walls, but of her certain place of residence, I became, once more, calm and indifferent. I sauntered towards the cathedral, examined its *in* and *exterior*, walked about the streets, and went into several of the shops.

The next day I was standing at the counter of a jeweller, who was fitting a

key to my watch, when some persons came into the shop, whose faces, as my back was to the door, I could not at first distinguish ; but the voice was sufficient : there was no occasion to turn my head to be convinced that one of them was the object of my thoughts. She addressed the jeweller with some enquiry about a bracelet ; and then drawing forward a high stool, said to her old lady, who was leaning on her arm, “ You had better sit whilst we stay.”

The master of the shop, instantly quitting me and my watch key, went round to attend on the females ; whilst the shopman as hastily took his place, for the double purpose of serving a customer, though for a trifle, and having a sharp eye on the opened glass of jewellery, which I was now, whilst hanging over, (my back still to the ladies,) examining with apparently profound curiosity, when, at the same time, every faculty was really absorbed in that of attention.

“ Yes,” observed the young female, “ the bracelet will do very well ; and

now I'll thank you to show me some pearl ornaments for the head."

"Mock, or real, madam?"

"Real, of course," said the *old* lady; "pearls are pearls."

These were produced, and the young one seemed to select, for her patroness, what she herself thought most becoming; though the answer of the latter was always, "Please yourself, my dear; you are the best judge." Is it possible, I thought, that this old fanciful spinster can think of decorating her grey locks with pearl crescents, and aigrettes! And the other seems eager to make her expose her folly! Aye, this is part of her trade, — flattery and obsequiousness.

"You go to the ball, I presume, Ma'am," said the jeweller; but which of the females it was he addressed I was not able to know, for they both answered in the affirmative, — the lady for herself, and the companion, as I judged, for her lady.

"Do you take tickets, sir?" said the shopman to me; spreading them, and a

number of hand-bills, on the counter, by which I saw the ball was to be given that night, for the benefit of some charitable institution. — I made no reply, but, taking out my purse, pocketed a few of the tickets, and offered a bank note to pay for them. At that moment, an empty barouche and pair, and postillions in dark-green and gold liveries, and an outrider, drove rapidly to the shop door. The old lady rose, with a bend of her head to the jeweller, whilst the young one offered her arm. Miss Powis being, with some assistance, placed in the carriage, the companion, with an elastic step, sprung in after her, called out “Go on,” returned the jeweller’s bow, when the vision vanished from before my eyes.

I stood for a few seconds, pondering on what I had seen and heard. As I now had had a complete view of their persons, I was led to think that the patroness spoiled her young friend, and by indulging her in habits unbecoming her retired and obscure rank in society, might yet be the means of exposing her to much mischief. The former was dressed

suitable to her time of life, in dark colours, of seemingly excellent quality, and well and closely wrapped up. The other certainly proper, in respect to age and personal loveliness, but not as to situation ; — the richly-embroidered light silk pelisse, the kid boots, and straw-coloured feathers, which played with the motion of the carriage as it drove on, gave her so decided an air of fashion and superiority, that, but for the voice, and transcendently beautiful face and figure, I should have found some difficulty in believing this was the same person I had seen in the deep poke bonnet, and the Scotch plaid.

I was at length roused from my reverie, by the shopman offering me change for a twenty pound note.

“ What’s this for ? ” I asked.

“ Your change, sir, for the note you gave me for twenty pound.”

“ Twenty ! I gave you a five pound note.”

“ I beg your pardon, sir ; but here it is still, as you laid it on the counter.”

“ And to which,” added the master jeweller, who now joined us, casting on me a penetrating look, “ you will have the goodness, sir, to put your name, and place of residence.”

Here was a dilemma! But I have invariably found, through life, that deception, no matter how innocent the intent, brings its own punishment. I might certainly have taken back the note, and given a five pound, which would have paid for the tickets, but this would have raised suspicion; and I therefore very calmly took the pen that was offered me, and wrote, “ Sir Eliot Howard, Bart.

— Inn, Exeter,” determined at once to throw off my travelling designation of *Mr. Eliot*, and, on my return to my inn, to arrange the direction on my portmanteau accordingly.

The jeweller bowed most profoundly, begged to be honoured with my commands during my stay, and offered me a few shop cards, which I put into my waistcoat pocket, at the same time saying, “ Who were those ladies in your shop just now?”

“ A Miss Powis, from S——, near Honiton.”

“ And the other?”

“ Upon my word, sir, I don’t know the name of the other. Do you, Thomas?” addressing the shopman; who, however, made no reply, but had his eyes fixed intently upon my right hand.

At last, as I was leaving the shop, he came suddenly between me and the door, saying, “ Sir, that umbrella you have just now been examining, and which you are walking away with, is not your’s; you certainly had no umbrella when you came in?” And he took it out of my unresisting hand, which was no more conscious of the difference between that and its own little cane switch, than the eyes above them of the difference of a five and a twenty pound note.

So wholly unconscious, also, was I of the *honourable* suspicions the fellow entertained of me, that I very calmly said, “ True;” and stood bending my cane against the door, and talking to the jeweller, who kept watching me most intently, when, once more, the barouche

drove past the door, and I darted into the street.

The waving feathers attracted my attention; and I observed my fair incog-nita, as she rattled onward, noticing her acquaintance and friends on both sides, with all those delicate and discriminating shades, or degrees of intimacy, which a thorough knowledge of the rules of society can alone teach, from the slight and dignified bow of bare recognition, to the warm kiss of the hand, the look back, the nod, and Hebe smile.

“ This is indeed carrying dependence off with a high hand,” I said, as I turned back slowly and dejectedly to my inn. “ A little more diffidence and sensibility would not be amiss.” I blamed, I ex-culpated, I framed excuses; could find no excuse; I ventured, even young as I was, to hazard a conjecture on what might be the future consequences of Miss Powis’s imprudent indulgence, unless she intended to place her favourite out of the reach of temptation, by se-curing to her a handsome independence; when the two interviews I had had with

the young person flashed upon my recollection, and I saw her again arrayed in innocence and purity.

She that could take such genuine, such heart-felt interest in the improvement of the infant poor, performing the duty she had taken upon herself with such cheerfulness, such perseverance, such mild entreaty, can have no common mind ; and then her visit to the cottages, like a ministering angel, with food and clothing, regardless of fatigue or personal inconvenience ; and such, no doubt, though I chanced to meet her only once, was her usual, perhaps her daily practice. The sudden and effectual check she gave my presumption, whether proceeding from pride or offended modesty is immaterial, since it had the desired effect ; — and then her conduct at church, so devout, so self-concentrated, so strictly proper. — I'll go to the ball to-night, however ; for though, perhaps, the rules of society preclude *her* admission, the dowager will be there. I'll contrive to get acquainted with *her*, at

all events, and from her I'll learn every particular concerning this girl.

During my soliloquy, the waiter had been trying, by dint of a couple of brushes, to turn my coat of brownish-black to a raven hue, and having tolerably succeeded, was assisting me to dress, (the shops of Exeter having supplied me with all that was otherwise requisite,) when the landlord made his appearance at the door, saying that Mr. ——, naming the jeweller in whose shop I had cut so *respectable* a figure, had been to enquire had a Sir Eliot Howard put up there. I saw clearly by this, that all travelling tricks must now be laid aside ; and feeling myself amenable to the laws of the land, and indeed the laws of society, I immediately opened my portmanteau, and taking out letters, and other documents, convinced the master of the house of my identity.

He and the waiter, as I was now dressed, left the room ; and I once more turned my thoughts on the beautiful object which, I could not but acknowledge to myself, was rapidly filling my heart,

to the exclusion of all others. I was resolved not to sleep until I had discovered her name, birth, and situation. If the latter are respectable, — if her character, from the cradle to the present hour, can be traced as irreproachable, no matter for her name, she shall not keep that long. I'll snatch her from dependence, from the horrors of a precarious livelihood, the uncertainty of future benefit ; she shall learn to hear me call her *my dear*, without a tragical start, a young blush, and a raised eye-brow. As Lady Howard, she may wear feathers, and feathers do certainly become her : as my wife, she may even — — Here my rhapsody was suddenly arrested by that acute sensation of pain arising from doubt, doubt leading to suspicion, suspicion to jealousy, and jealousy almost to madness.

Suppose her affections should be already engaged. My mere personal appearance, it is evident, has not made the slightest impression on her imagination, as she left me, as she thought, many miles distant, and for ever ; and here I

find her at Exeter, glowing in all the brilliancy of health and conscious beauty. Besides, I think I distinguished two military men, to whom she bowed very graciously, when, like a conqueror, scattering her nods and smiles on each side of the street, as she rattled furiously down it.

Though she were paying the “How do you do?” honours for her patroness, she ought to be a little more reserved, more humble, more conscious of the really melancholy situation which she fills in life.—I’ll this very night make every enquiry concerning her of Miss Powis, ask permission to call upon her the next day,—obtain an introduction, cultivate an acquaintance. I am of age, I am my own master; she cannot be more than eighteen. Yes, this night decides my fate.—Prophetic words indeed, Clonmore, for before the clock struck twelve, my destiny was fixed.

Sir Eliot in continuation.

I entered the ball-room rather late; dancing had been long begun, though, at the moment of my going in, the company were either seated, or walking in pairs. At a glance, I saw the place was thronged with military men, whose band was playing in fine style; but accustomed, as I had been lately, to so many hours of the fresh open air, I felt the heat intolerable, and was turning away to seek the card-room, where I thought it most probable I should find my old spinster, when my arm was seized, and my hand heartily shaken, by one of the officers, in whom I recognized Charles Maxwell, our old college chum, then a cornet in the — dragoons.

We got clear of the crowd, and into a corner, where ancient times were talked over, and present affairs debated upon. On my remarking the full attendance of this ball, he replied, “There is not a black, a red, a blue, a green, or a brown *unmarried* coat, ornamented or plain, in this room, that is not attracted hither by

the heiress who is expected here this evening, for the first time."

" And who, and *what* is she?"

" A Miss Powis, of Dorsetshire."

" Powis! Had you said a dowager, instead of an heiress, the term would have been more appropriate."

" Oh, oh! You, Howard, I see, are one of the numerous disappointed coveters of this golden fruit, now under dragon guardianship. She was just now called a dowdy, by that fellow you see yonder in green and gold, who, in return for his amorous suit, received a suit of rejection. Her uncle, Colonel Powis, of Oakland Park, is a worthy man enough: he is expected here to-night, with Mrs. Powis, to introduce their niece for the first time to an Exeter assembly."

" I think she is quite old enough to *go alone*."

" Why, she's not yet fifty," returned Maxwell, with appropriate gravity; " she is not, upon my honour."

The certain conviction that he was now bantering me, had the effect to banish a rising suspicion in my mind,

which, strange as it may appear to you, Clonmore, had never before entered my imagination, — that the *younger* lady might be Miss Powis, instead of the elder ; and I now answered, pettishly, “ Well, well, try your luck with her ; you brave, hot-headed, wild Irishmen, generally have a happy knack at these things ; I would advise your *red* coat to try and bear off the prize from every other colour assembled here.”

“ Not I : though a soldier of fortune; *ergo*, of no fortune, I’ll never be beholden to a wife for a guinea. If I marry, (if ever I should marry, and of that I doubt,) my girl shall look up to me, not I to her. May all the evils of that worst sort of slavery fall on me, the reproaches of a rich wife, if ever I change my mind on this subject. Now *you*, Howard, indeed, *you* have pretensions ; your person, title, and wealth, authorize you to address this universal idol.”

“ Thank you ; but I’m in no hurry to worship idols not *yet* fifty.”

“ Oh, you would choose them above that mark. Is that your taste ? Well ;

step to the card-room within, and from one of the whist-tables you may pick and choose.”

“ For Heaven’s sake, Maxwell, be serious for one moment, and tell me, as you are acquainted with this Miss Powis, perhaps you also know she has a companion ?”— And I felt myself redden as I pronounced these words.

“ A companion ! to be sure she has ; *there* are lilies and roses ! and blooms and Venus’ smiles for you. A Perdita ! a Paragon ! a youthful Minerva ! — And so, Howard, this is your taste after all !”

Completely deceived by his manner, I said, “ Can you introduce me to her, my dear fellow ?”

“ Hush !” he replied ; and looking towards the folding doors of the room, which were now thrown open, he drew me back a step or two, still enjoining silence.

I perceived a circle forming near the door, which prevented my seeing the figures of those who had just come in ; but it opened a few minutes after, when I recognized the old lady, and alone ; —

by alone, I mean her companion was not with her; for the venerable Miss herself was leaning on the arm of an elderly gentleman, who having led her to a seat, returned to the circle, which had now advanced to the centre of the room, and had become still wider and deeper, by the addition of almost all the male part of the society, excepting Maxwell and myself.

He soon quitted me, and I remained in the same corner, from whence I had a good view of the respectable maiden, whose rich, dark velvet dress, was simple, close, and very becoming. In vain I looked for the pearls; her head seemed enveloped in a lace hood, which set off her pale, yet elegant and placid features, to the greatest advantage.

I soon after met the eyes of Maxwell, who immediately drew near me with the elderly gentleman I had before observed, and whom he introduced as Colonel Powis.

“ I was an old friend of your father’s, Sir Eliot,” said the Colonel, shaking hands with me; “ he and I were at col-

lege at the same time, and served in more than one campaign together in America: and if you come this way, I'll present you to an old friend of your mother."

I followed, and met with a cordial reception from Mrs. Powis.

"And now," said he, "you must be acquainted with my niece, not the least charming of the three, I assure you."

I followed in silence, when the brilliant throng opening at the instant to admit him, there in the centre I beheld, dressed with richness, radiant with jewels, more radiant in beauty, my village school-mistress, my humble mantua-maker, my lowly lady's maid, my poor companion. The spell was broken; she was now the queen of the night, the golden fruit, the universal idol; in short, Miss Powis, the lovely heiress.

"Claudina, my dear," said the Colonel, "allow me to introduce a young gentleman, whose father, Sir Frederick Howard, you have often heard me mention with friendship.—My niece, Miss Powis."

All this was the affair of a moment ; but judge, Clonmore, of my feelings, when the young lady, after the slight courtsey which common politeness exacted, scarcely, indeed, honouring me with a glance, turned round, and continued her conversation with those near her ; and yet I could perceive that her looks wandered, that her mind was pre-occupied, and, in short, anywhere, but where it ought to have been.

Her attention was, however, soon recalled by the good old Colonel, who said to her, whilst looking at me, “ Are you engaged, my love, after the four first dances ? if you are not, perhaps — ”

“ But, indeed, my dear uncle, I am, and for the whole evening ; that, however, can be no disappointment to your friend Sir *Frederic Howard* ; let him only look around, and he will see that there are many more ladies than gentlemen, among whom he cannot fail of choosing a far superior partner.”

Chilled and mortified at this reception, so far different to what I had expected ; disgusted at an affectation of humility,

(and particularly at her pretending to mistake my Christian name,) conscious, as she must have been, that she was the reigning planet of the evening, I stepped back, murmuring in my own bosom the unconnected phrases of “ Stately grandeur ! pompous pride ! heiress, and affectation. Oh, that my fond hopes had been realised, that you had been, indeed, the poor obscure, humble girl I at first supposed you, — then might you have become mine ; now, you are lost to me for ever, or rather, you are, you have been, you can be nothing to me.”

How singular, Clonmore, that at the very instant I was for ever renouncing her, our souls were on the point of uniting in indissoluble bonds ! Maxwell, I believe, began to understand the error I had been in, and now saw the state of my agonised and disappointed feelings.

“ You are not well,” he said, putting his arm under mine ; “ you had better leave the room.”

“ The heat is, indeed, oppressive,” I replied, suppressing my emotions through

respect to the company ; “ if I could get into the air it would be of service.”

As I spoke, and was retreating, I could not avoid casting one, as I thought, last look at that noble, that lovely, that beauteous countenance ; when, judge my astonishment ! I perceived her eyes fixed on me, steadily, nay rapturously, her attention awakened, as was but too evident to all around, by my voice. She took a hasty step or two towards me, exclaiming involuntarily, “ *Mr. Eliot!* ” when the blood rushed to her cheeks, and she turned to the spot where sat her female friend, (the *real* companion,) and exchanged with her one single glance.

This, though unintelligible to every soul in the room, excepting themselves and me, fell upon my heart with so overpowering a sensation, that I could scarcely support myself ; neither would I have exchanged that one look given to her old friend, for hundreds of the tenderest nature to myself. That exclamation, that remembrance of my voice, that look to the companion, spoke volumes : by these proofs alone, I ob-

tained the full certainty, that — (how or wherefore, I had yet to learn) but that I was valued, and solely for my own sake, I no longer doubted.

Aware of her situation, however, the object of universal scrutiny and attention, she instantly recovered herself, and turning playfully to the Colonel, said, " My dear uncle, this gentleman and I have met before ; but how came you to introduce him as Sir Frederic Howard ? "

" My dear niece," returned the Colonel, with good presence of mind, " this gentleman and you seem to have met before to very little purpose, since it is plain you don't know his name ; I introduced him to you as Sir *Eliot* Howard, (which by the bye he did not,) the son of my old friend, the *late* Sir Frederic ; but really your little brain is so bewildered with thoughts of all the conquests you mean to make to-night, and the expectation of proposals I shall receive to-morrow, that you gave him but a sorry reception."

Then turning to me, he said, " Never

mind that girl, Sir Eliot, she's the greatest flirt in my family ; she'll coquet with you this evening, and, perhaps, tomorrow, give you the stare of 'Who are you?' Never mind her, but trust the word of an old soldier, who will be heartily glad to see you on Wednesday at M—— near Dawlish."

The Colonel gave me his card, but I could make no answer. I was so perfectly giddy that I could scarcely stand ; Maxwell, therefore, grasped my arm, and led me fairly out of the house. With much delicacy he continued as silent as myself during our walk to my inn, where he left me, saying he would breakfast with me the next morning.

Oppressed with a weight of happiness, do you think, Clonmore, I could close my eyes that night in sleep ? The morning came, and the cornet was true to his promise. As he took his place at the breakfast-table, throwing down his sword, helmet, sash, and gloves, whilst I traversed the room, I enquired, had he returned to the rooms on leaving me ?

He had. "And I suppose that dancing was kept up till late?"

"It was."

"Who did you dance with?"

"With Miss Chalmers, and Miss —" adding half-a-dozen other names equally unimportant to me, when I interrupted him with, "At what hour did Colonel Powis leave?"

"At three o'clock."

"And the spirit of the night did not, I suppose —"

"Come, come, Baronet, I am here to breakfast, not to talk; so if you don't make the tea, I will." And he began doing the honours, by helping himself and me most plentifully to every thing that was spread before us.

After a moment's consideration, I resolved to relieve my mind at once by communicating the whole of what had passed to Maxwell; and I firmly believe, that by this determination I escaped a fever. He listened to me with the profoundest attention, interrupted at times by, "Hand me the muffineer;" "Give

me the cream ;" " Another slice or two of tongue ;" " Confound this egg, 'tis cold ;" until my patience being entirely exhausted, I started up, exclaiming, " Well, sir, when you have finished your breakfast I'll talk to you, and not till then."

" And when you have finished *your* breakfast," said Maxwell, pouring out his sixth or seventh cup of coffee or tea, " I'll talk to *you*, and *not till then*."

I looked at him steadily, and saw there was meaning in his arch good-humoured face ; and taking his friendly advice, I sat down quietly to my meal, which after a sleepless night was much wanted, and which now greatly refreshed me.

" The devil's in *you* lovers," said Maxwell, as the table was clearing ; " *you* will neither eat yourselves, nor suffer others to eat."

I then resumed the subject, and beginning at the circumstance of hearing the Ariel voice in the church-yard, related every particular that had occurred to the present hour.

" And now," I said, " speak out frankly. What have you to say to me ?

What did take place after your return to the rooms?"

Instead of entering into detail, Maxwell started up, and wringing my hand, said, "I wish you joy — I do, faith. — I am always desirous of hearing a gentleman's story first, through delicacy to the lady; but I now repeat, I do most sincerely wish you joy. It is a settled thing; she is your's. I would bet fifty to one, that Miss Powis is Lady Howard in less than six months."

"Nonsense, you have only received the confessions of one of the parties; you cannot judge of the state of her mind towards me."

"No! had you been present last night in the ball-room, after your departure, (as we would say in Tipperary,) your modesty would have been put to the blush. At my return, Miss Powis, who was my partner in the two second dances, enquired of me, were you recovered from the effects of the heat; approved highly of your determination not to return to the rooms that night, — and then —"

"Well, and then!" I exclaimed, impatiently.

"Why then," continued Maxwell, "like a woman of good sense, scrupulous delicacy, and perfect politeness, she danced for the remainder of the night with all to whom she had engaged herself, and with a spirit, a grace, a cheerfulness, that showed she had the perfect command of her own feelings, and was aware of the deference due to those of others; instead of playing the heroine, insulting the gentlemen with whom she had promised to dance, by pleading illness, affecting low spirits, or absence of mind, or having recourse to airs of sensibility, (a fine word sometimes for sulky selfishness,) she behaved just as — the future Lady Howard ought to behave, and thereby secured the admiration and good wishes of all present, even of unsuccessful rivals."

"But you do not think, Maxwell, that the emotion she showed on first recognizing me, was observed by any but myself?"

"Depend upon it, it was, by her uncle,

by her aunt, by me, and by above twenty others. It was nature itself speaking; it was too powerful for concealment, though, with real propriety, she as quickly recovered herself. The effect of your presence was instantaneous, was visible, was certain. *Your* emotion assisted *her's*; and the general belief now is, that a mutual, though secret, attachment exists between you, which, as you are equal in every respect, will in due time be crowned with success."

"But, good heavens, man, we have never exchanged above a dozen words."

"'Pon my life,'" returned Maxwell, "that's no business of mine: though you may not have exchanged a dozen words, it is plain you have exchanged hearts, and I believe, in the long run, that will do equally as well."

At this moment Colonel Powis was announced, and Maxwell soon after took his leave. A pressing invitation to quit Exeter, to take up my abode at Dawlish for the present, and to dine with him the next day, were communicated by the Colonel, and willingly agreed to by me.

I saw him depart with as much pleasure as I felt at his entrance ; and then gave way to the fond indulgence of thought, — the luxury of tracing the past, the delight of anticipating the future.

How apt we are, Clonmore, as we get on in life, to blush at the recollection of the juvenile trifles that first give rise to courtship, and that attend its progress, the wind up of which is, Heaven knows, serious enough, whether successful or otherwise. It is playing with iron and flint ; we persist in striking, perhaps in sport, until the spark is caught ; — it may be as suddenly extinguished ; it may in its consequences prove useful and cheering, or awful, and tremendously destructive.

Trace courtship to its source, and then reflect on its results. It may begin with a transient look, a silly or a sincere compliment, followed by a sillier, or a more or less sincere reply ; the picking up a fan, or the purloining a pocket-book ; the

breaking a parasol, the finding a stray ring, the admiring a picture, the accidental assistance afforded in a walk, whether in town or country. In short, no two courtships perhaps ever had the same beginning; therefore the attempt to enumerate the rise of each, even among our own acquaintance, is utterly impracticable. From, however, the slightest cause, perhaps originating without any decided intention in either party, arises a preference; this ripens into a vague wish of settling in life; a mutual explanation and engagement follow, (or perhaps, an engagement without any explanation;) friends on both sides, or on one side only, are or are not consulted; and at length the holy, solemn, and indissoluble tie of matrimony is formed; and then, perhaps for the first time, the parties begin to look about them.

Thus, (like the banian tree, which, springing from the minutest speck of vegetable life, expands into a forest,) generation succeeds generation, until the final extinction of the human race.— Thus, from the trifle of a moment, are

formed the sacred connections of brother, sister, father, mother, and child! Population increases, society spreads, worldly happiness or misery is produced, union and disunion in private families, harmony and discord among crowned heads, friendly alliances are contracted; and, frequently, depopulating wars, are the result of individual and domestic grievances. The factions and intrigues of courts are otherwise to us of little importance; but the origin of your and my courtship is to us, and our descendants, of the greatest.

I recollect your betraying to me *your* secret at its very commencement, and discovering your intentions, before perhaps you had formed any, (as Maxwell would say,) and simply thus:—We were together on Richmond Terrace one fine frosty morning in December, walking briskly to and fro, conversing on—I forget what subject; but I remember your frequently putting up your spy-glass, watching the opposite meadows, and then dropping your hand impatiently; when, at sight of a boat putting off from the other side, you broke from my arm,

saying, “ I must go to Twickenham ;— we’ll meet at the Star and Garter, Kew Bridge. Good-bye ; she yesterday lost this little fur tippet, (taking it from your pocket,) during her walk with her mother up the hill from Petersham, and I must return it to her.”

“ Send it to Twickenham by the boatman yonder,” I called out after you.

“ No, no,” was the loud reply ; “ I must give it into her own hands ; it may be of consequence.”

This tippet “ of consequence” was perhaps worth a couple of shillings. Indeed, Mrs. Clonmore has since herself declared, that she did not think a Jew would have given sixpence for it ;— and it was not until three hours afterwards, when we did meet again, and I raved at you for keeping me and our horses waiting, that I knew to whom the *elegant* but expressive appellation of *she* referred.

“ Beg pardon, Howard,” you called out, when you could distinguish my long and impatient face ; “ beg pardon for keeping you ; but the young lady was with one of her masters, and I had to

wait until the lesson was over. I thought she might have some message (and she had) to send back by me to her mother at Petersham."

" And who is this young lady, for whom you have taken the trouble twice to cross the Thames, and walk upwards of four miles to take messages, and restore a paltry rabbit-skin ?"

" A Miss Louisa Vivian," you replied, " who is at school at ——."

" What, where my sister Caroline is a boarder ! — You might have informed me you were going there, I would have accompanied you, though I saw the dear little girl the other day. Did you see Caroline ?"

" No," you replied ; " I only saw Miss Vivian."

These words were really true enough ; as it afterwards appeared by Caroline's own account, that though she with other of the pupils were present at your entrance into the parlour, you had no eyes but for Louisa. — We mounted our horses ; and though I saw by your glowing face, and half-bitten lip, endeavour-

ing to hide a conscious smile, how it was with you, I was determined not to give you the lead of explanation, as at that time I despised all affairs of that nature, as unworthy of occupying the mind of a man of sense.

Some years after, your marriage followed ; and at this present hour, I, in idea, behold you both the fond and affectionate couple, the anxious and indulgent parents, the rulers of a well-established household, and the pastor and the mistress of an extensive parish.

This was the origin of *your* courtship, Clonmore ; and for your present happiness, you have to thank the old fur tippet. What gave rise to mine I have now detailed, whereby we may see and trace the endless chain of causes and effects. Had I not thought proper to stand laughing at ridiculous epitaphs, and watching a couple of little Devonshire clowns at play in the church-yard, I might not at this instant be inhabiting Teneriffe.

Sir Eliot in continuation.

I arrived at —, near Dawlish, the same evening ; and the next day, according to appointment, went to the house of Colonel Powis. — “ I fear I am late,” I remarked, whilst ringing at the gate, and taking out my watch. Had I looked at it before I had rang, I should certainly, on perceiving it was only three o’clock, have returned to my inn. But it was too late to retreat ; a servant had seen me, and I was ushered into the drawing-room, where, to my great confusion, I found Mrs. Powis alone, and reading ; and by her looks, evidently not expecting to see dinner guests at that hour.

The Colonel, however, almost immediately entering, relieved my college embarrassment, by letting me at once see that he knew the cause of my early appearance.

“ Well,” said he to Mrs. Powis, in a very loud yet cheerful voice, and taking out his watch, “ and what are we to do with this young Ovid until the rest

of the party come? You, my dear, I should think, could not talk over college affairs with him, as I could, were I not forced to attend a brother magistrate. Do you know any thing of fellows and students, proctors, doctors, wranglers, and masters? You cannot even enquire after the round-wigged porter, or the black-eyed bedmaker, as I could. What shall we do with him; it is now three o'clock, and we dine at six."

I suppose I coloured, and looked aukward and sheepish; for as the continental wars had excluded our generation from making the grand tour, I had no other shield than English modesty; and this, perhaps, in the eyes of this worthy couple, was preferable to the brazen target of foreign assurance.

" Well, well," said the Colonel, " at one-and-twenty all this is fair; at one-and-thirty, indeed, we might have to wait dinner for you; and, believe me, Sir Eliot, the first error is the most excusable. But I am serious as to how I can amuse you; for my wife being deaf, you and she will only be in each other's way;

and I am forced to attend justice duties; unless, indeed, you will follow me to my study, and help my clerk to sign a mittimus or two. — Eh, *Mr. Eliot?*”

At this proof that Miss Powis had communicated to him the circumstances of our first meeting, my embarrassment increased; and I was beginning an explanation of the truth, when Mrs. Powis, who had rung for refreshments, observed that there were here books, and portfolios of prints and drawings, in looking over which, she had no doubt, I should find some amusement. The Colonel judged otherwise; or rather, as I watched the door of the room, he read every motion and change of my heart in my varying countenance, on which neither time nor fashion had as yet fixed their seal; — after I had joined them in their sandwiches, and wine and water, he led me to a glass door, which opened from the drawing-room upon the lawn.

“ Suppose,” he said, “ I turn you out of the house again at once: I have no doubt you will prefer it to the restraint of remaining within. Just cross

the green in a diagonal direction, enfilade a little gate on the right, make a sortie on the downs beyond ; and if you should feel inclined to reconnoitre the beach, I have some suspicion you may meet there with a *certain* guide, who will be happy to show you all the neighbouring strong holds and posts, — that is, if you are inclined to follow.”

I understood him — I heard no more ; but, snatching my hat, was off like a rocket, to use his own phrase ; shooting through the gate, I crossed the downs, and reached the sands. I had not walked ten yards, when I overtook two females busily employed in searching for shells and sea-weeds, with which they were filling a small basket placed on the ground between them. The memorable straw poke-bonnet and black ribbon, the green veil, and the Scotch plaid, were, indeed, certain guides. And before I drew quite near, I gave a loud hem, for the surge was rough, and the wind so high, that footsteps could not easily be heard ; besides which, I distinguished once more that full, clear, enchanting

laugh, so expressive of innocence and good-humour.

My loud hem was all-sufficient; Miss Powis turned round, and on perceiving me exclaimed, with evident delight, “Mr. El—! I beg your pardon, *Sir* Eliot; but I am really so accustomed to this *Mr. Eliot*.”

Here was inadvertence, Clonmore! here was full confession! I was at first resolved not to take advantage of the confusion which her cheeks plainly and instantly betrayed; and stooping, I took up the basket with some remarks on the shells and sea-weeds; when a suspicion coming across me, (though how to reconcile it with my personal identity, I knew not,) that she might have a friend of the name, I completely laid aside my delicate reserve, and remarked, “Perhaps, Miss Powis, you *are* acquainted with a Mr. Eliot?”

Truth ever sat like a cherub on her lips, and she quickly replied, “Oh no, I know no person of that name except yourself.”

And then, conscious of the interpreta-

tion I might put on her words, and as if determined to summons all the strength of prudence, by changing my course of ideas, she said, "And what have you done, Sir Eliot, with my uncle and aunt; for I see by your appearance you have been at the house."

"The Colonel," I replied, "is *ac-*quitting or *committing* some delinquent or other; Mrs. Powis is criticising the Quarterly critics; and not knowing how to get rid of me handsomely, they directed me where to find you, that I might throw myself on your mercy."

"I am infinitely obliged to them," she replied, gaily.

"Then perhaps, Miss Powis, you will take a turn or two with me on the sands?"

"With pleasure;" and with an expression of archness not to be described, speaking to the other female, (a servant in appearance,) she said, imitating the broad dialect of the county, and glancing at me, "but the hour! — Susan, *What's o'clock?*"

The apple-cheeked, dark-eyed girl,

with a smirk of pleasure at her young mistress's whimsical mode of address, though forgetful of the latent meaning, and which gave me such secret delight, stood silent, as not knowing what to answer ; when I, with an expressive look at Miss Powis, a look of perfect explanation, said in the same dialect, “ *Past twelve.*”

“ *Past twelve !*” said Susan ; “ la, sir ! it must be past four.”

“ Well, no matter,” replied her mistress ; “ do you go home, and take this basket with you ; and tell Bates it is time enough to dress an hour or two hence. I shall walk a little longer ; and Susan, do *forget to remember* fastening the garden gate as you did yesterday, by which I had to go above half a mile round.”

Away went Susan, with her broad good-humoured face, her thick shoes thruffing through the pebbles, whilst we turned downward to the sands, the tide being out, and walked leisurely.

Miss Powis’s first remark was, “ How welcome and refreshing the air, and the light spray of the sea, after being

confined so many hours in that insufferably hot room last night, surrounded by a crowd of persons one had scarcely ever seen before, and not one of whom one would perhaps wish to see again."

The ice thus fairly broken, and by herself, it was my turn to observe, "There was one individual among the crowd, whom you *had* seen before, were you displeased at seeing *him* again?"

"And pray, if I may venture on so slight an acquaintance to make the enquiry, what might you be doing so long at S—— in Dorsetshire. My guardian lives there, his house, or rather my house, for he is my tenant until I shall be of age, adjoins the parsonage, and one of the fields is only separated from the church-yard by a low wall, under which grow the sweetest violets! Susan and I often went to gather them."

With the most playful vivacity she then repeated both the epitaphs, and for the first time her laugh was mingled with my own.

"My dear old friend, Mrs. Stewart, and I," she continued, "in our walks, rides, and

drives, frequently saw you when rambling about the village and its neighbourhood."

" Was that Mrs. Stewart, whom I saw with you in the chariot, at the door of the inn, and at the ball?"

" It was ; she is the widow of a naval officer, and a most excellent creature : she was the early companion of my mother, since whose death she has lived with me, and whilst I exist, my roof, table, and equipage are as much her's as my own.' (You remember, Clonmore, how faithfully this promise was kept, for Mrs. Stewart, soon after our marriage, died in the arms of Claudina, and in your presence.)

" But to return to my first question," continued Miss Powis ; " what motive could induce you to take up your abode, and for so long a time, in such an obscure village as S——. We observed you frequently drawing and reading.—My old friend conjectured you were an artist come down from town to take views."

" And what was your conjecture?"

" Oh, that you were a poet, and that

you lived thus retired, not from choice but necessity ; whilst my old guardian, to whom we often mentioned you, growled at our suppositions, and said you were certainly a strolling actor. One day, that we had met you in the dress of a sportsman, (sporting in the month of May !) I believe verily his old wife did say something of fortune being your sport : on which I most wittily remarked, “ No, ma’am, this Mr. Eliot seems to be the sport of fortune ;” when Mrs. Stewart retorted, “ and I hope fortune may yet overtake him.”

“ But my name, Miss Powis; I have yet to learn how you came to know that ?”

“ Nothing more easy. Susan, the very girl who has just quitted us, was passing the inn-door at the moment of your arrival on foot, when you enquired aloud, (and in a proud, grand manner, ‘ like a real gentleman,’ as Susan said,) ‘ was there a portmanteau there for a Mr. Eliot.’ She was with me, as I mentioned before, when I was gathering violets under the church-yard wall, and checked

my risibility by saying, 'Hush ma'am, Mr. Eliot will hear you,' apparently as familiar with your name, as if you had been an old acquaintance of her's."

"But that was the only time you saw me unobserved by myself."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Stewart and I seemed doomed to meet with you every time we stirred beyond our own walls.—My carriage one morning had nearly run over a lame pedlar, crossing the road; the horses were restive and unmanageable, and drove on rapidly; but my anxiety was greatly relieved by seeing you from the window assist him to a bank, and pick up the money I threw out, which he seemed so thankfully to receive.

"Another day, I passed you on horseback, as you were trundling a heavily-laden barrow up a steep hill for the very identical old woman to whom I was carrying a dinner and a flannel dress, when Mrs. Stewart and the carriage were waiting for me in the road; for it is a maxim I learned from my mother, to give with my own hand, and to speak with my own

voice. You had once taken your station on the village stocks, setting all the ragged boys of the place scrambling for apples, a whole stall of which you had previously overturned for the purpose. One of your exploits, Sir Eliot, was perfectly Arcadian; you stood the friend of a lamb separated from its mother by a rapid brook, which neither party were able to cross. We watched you carrying the bleating little creature in your arms, and restoring it to the ewe."

Thus did Miss Powis enumerate a variety of similar adventures, which could only happen to a pedestrian and an idler; but which, it seems, had made an indelible impression on her youthful, ardent, and rather romantic disposition. It was not, as you may suppose, at this time, and indeed not till after our marriage, that she acknowledged her having formed an opinion, that I was a tall, well-looking, elegant young fellow, with some share of courage, good-nature, generosity, and tenderness — which compensated, in her mind, for my rusty black coat, brown hat, and mended boots; add to which,

she had on some occasion or other remarked the extraordinary appearance of my hands ; and let me assure you, she said, “ That no matter to us, whether a man’s face is as brown as Tippoo Saib’s, provided his hands are white and delicate as those of Adonis.”

“ And now, Baronet,” concluded the charming girl, “ answer for yourself.”

I caught a portion of her vivacity, and replied, “ First, heiress, answer for *yourself*; for against my shabby appearance, I have your ‘ James, spell that word again.’ Your basket of provisions and bundle of needle-work, you have already accounted for ; but the school —”

“ Is my own — I founded it about three years ago, and placed over it old dame Withers, whom you saw when you intruded among my scholars, with your ‘ shillings,’ and ‘ dunces,’ and ‘ parish clerks ;’ at which, I could scarcely keep my gravity. When at home at my guardian’s, I make it a daily practice to attend to the children myself, for about an hour, and hear the classes.”

“ And at church ?”

“ You were in *my* pew ; though, as I observed before, that, and the great house and lands around it, are at present rented by my guardian. I saw you again at the inn-door, on my way to Sidmouth, where my uncle and aunt were to have met me, and where we designed to pass some months ; but there on my arrival I found a letter, saying military circumstances had obliged him to change his mind, and desiring us to come on to him at Exeter. And now Mr. — I was going to say *Mr.* again — well, *Sir Eliot*, are you now satisfied ?”

“ No, you have only drawn a slight sketch, when I expected a finished painting, complete in all its parts, and decisive in its colouring.” She perfectly understood my meaning, and was therefore silent. “ You have omitted one of our accidental rencontres,” I observed at last ; “ that in the jeweller’s shop, when you were ordering some pearl ornaments for the ball.”

“ Were you there also ? I do now recollect seeing a gentleman standing at one of the counters behind me, but had

not the slightest idea of its being you. He seemed clad in a very superior style to the wandering *solitaire* of S——; therefore I paid no attention to him. Had I been aware it had been *you*, indeed! —”

“ And who was *I*, Miss Powis?” I replied, my soul beaming in my eyes, in return for this artless, this candid avowal of involuntary preference. “ You knew not who *I* was. I had never been introduced to you. I was not, therefore, to be put on the footing of the most distant acquaintance. Passing over our interview in the field, which was accidental, you in the innocence of your heart were wrong, in acknowledging me by a bow from your carriage at the inn; but far more indiscreet in claiming me as an acquaintance at the ball; unless, indeed, it was in consequence of the Colonel’s introduction, though not by the same name you concluded to be mine. Supposing, for an instant, I had been in reality a totally different character to what *I* am, — a sharper, a swindler, a gambler, — we must not always judge by

externals ; — we will say, supposing I *had* been such, what might have been the consequences to you, in the eye of society, your thus publicly acknowledging an intimacy with a person of that description.— I now conclude my sermon ; and am so confident that it will be taken in good part, I make no apology for giving it.”

Indeed I saw, by the expression of her countenance, I had nothing to fear on that head ; and yet it was a mixed expression ; — there was something passing in her mind I could not well understand ; and upon which it was equally impossible to question her.

What an union of firmness and delicacy the female mind of honour ! Had a naked blade been held to Claudina’s bosom, or a pistol to her head, the fear of death perhaps had failed to extort a confession of what then filled her thoughts ; and it was not till some days *after* our marriage, that, on reminding her of the circumstance, she communicated it to me. I cannot give you the exact words ; but it was something of the same nature

that occupies the mind of Juliet, when, after the ball, she sends her nurse to make enquiries concerning Romeo.— Miss Powis knew I was unmarried, but she could not be assured I was disengaged; and this was her doubt at the time.

She thanked me for my advice; acknowledged that having early lost her parents, she perhaps had contracted a sort of independence of character, not suited exactly to her time of life; and candidly added, that, but for her good Mrs. Stewart, she should have fallen into the commission of many follies, from which good sense, experience, and knowledge of the world, had preserved her.

“ For example,” continued Claudina, “ I was once actually on the point of stopping you on the common, when you were walking in one of your deep reveries, to ask you whether you drew portraits as well as landscapes, when Mrs. Stewart checked me, by saying it was rather improper for me to speak first.

“ ‘ But where is the harm?’ I argued; ‘ if he exercises his talents for a liveli-

hood, he must be a man of honour ; and I, as a rich girl, ought to employ and reward him. — Well then, my dear old friend, do you speak to him.' This she intended to do, when you started from your meditations, took a leap over a hedge, and disappeared.

" Another time we saw you reading attentively, as you lay stretched in the sun on a log of timber. You repeated a few lines aloud, when I observed, ' He *is* a poet, and I *will* go and ask him the subject of his muse. I am confident he is in the pastoral line.' You were reading ' *The Farmer's Boy* ;' for we passed without being perceived close behind you. But bold as I was at a distance, when it came to the point I had not courage to address you first ; and on seeing you frequently afterwards, reading, drawing, or stationary, when admiring the views around, I yielded to my friend's advice, though at the same time I thought it perfectly absurd and unreasonable. You were a stranger to me, it is true ; and there are many whom I have known from infancy, who to this

hour appear strangers to me ; whilst you, whom I have not seen to speak to above three times, seem an old acquaintance. I could almost fancy you and I were introduced to each other before the creation —”

She stopped abruptly ; once more aware of the conclusion I could not fail drawing from this full and complete avowal of approbation. — Approbation ! ridiculous ! Had you beheld the eyes, which, though cast upon the ground, I could see were filled with tenderness ; — had you watched, as I did from my superior height, (the wind being now permitted to blow back the bonnet,) the varying blush, the averted head ; — nay, had you heard the tone of sensibility with which these words were rapidly pronounced, you would now allow me to change the word tenderness to that of love.

The first dinner-bell sounded as we reached the lawn. Claudina returned to the house a private way ; and I went through the glass door into the drawing-

room, where I found several persons assembled, and amongst other military men, to my great relief, Charles Maxwell. The conversation became general, until the door opening, Claudina again appeared, simply, yet elegantly dressed.

Our eyes met no more ; I did not attempt to sit by her at dinner ; but with alacrity took my place on the right hand of Mrs. Powis, and neither accosted Claudina during the meal, nor even glanced at her but once, when, with great satisfaction, I saw her engaged in a spirited conversation with Maxwell, whose eye having once caught, I afterwards avoided, as I felt his look made my cheek glow with inward satisfaction.

The dinner over, I was one of the last who joined the ladies ; when the Colonel, soon after coming into the drawing-room, called out, to my great surprise and pleasure, “ Come, boys and girls, lend a hand ; clear away ; off with chairs and tables, push back the sofas, and now for a country-dance, this fine cold May evening : that’s the delight of my old soul ; better by half than all your piano thrum-

ming, and opera-singing. My wife and I would dance also, only we are both lame ; her ladyship has the rheumatics, and I the gout.”

At the mention of the word dance, Claudina and I exchanged looks ; I went up to her as she stood near the window, and without a word on either side, her hand was in mine.

“ That’s right,” said the Colonel, throwing us a glance, as he lifted a screen out of the way ; “ the Baronet was disappointed of his amusement last night, so we must make him amends now.”

Two servants were called in, who each played on the violin, and a third the tambourine : a cold collation followed ; and at three o’clock the next morning, I found myself at my own quarters, in a state of mental happiness of which you have had some experience.

You will not be surprised that the next day found me at the Colonel’s. I had ransacked my portmanteau for every drawing I had made at S——, and amongst others, that of the village school.

I took them with me ; and saying to Claudina, they were perhaps of peculiar interest to her, being views of a part of the country which I now understood to be her own property, I begged her to accept of the whole, about twenty in number.

She politely consented, and with thanks ; then placed them in a small portfolio, on which she wrote my name as the artist, and left them on one of the tables in the drawing-room, for general amusement.

Thus was I for two months the daily welcome guest of the Colonel ; and as I could perceive, no less a favourite with him than with Mrs. Powis and Mrs. Stewart. Claudina and I walked, rode, and sailed together, either in parties or alone. During which time I had the pleasure of secretly hearing from Maxwell, that all my rivals, Claudina's suitors, (and these were more than three or four in number,) had been decisively dismissed, but with every expression of grateful politeness, delicacy, and regret.

Neither the Colonel nor Mrs. Powis knew exactly what terms their niece and I were upon ; but such was their reliance on our coming to some decision, and soon, that they did not think proper to interfere ; and thus were we still situated, when the period arrived I had fixed upon for my return to Oxford.

It was on a Sunday, a sacrament Sunday, and, as usual, I had accompanied the family to church. After the service, Claudina retired to her own room, and I walked out alone on the sands. We met at dinner ; but the Colonel being gone to Exeter, and Mrs. Powis not well enough to leave her room, we formed only a trio at table. After dinner I would have taken my leave for the remainder of the day, much, however, against my will, when I received a message through Mrs. Stewart, from Mrs. Powis, requesting me not to go away until the Colonel returned ; adding, that if she was well enough she would join us at tea.

“ And have you no message for *me*, old friend ? ” enquired Claudina.

“ Yes, little harum scarum ; that you stay and entertain Sir Eliot, and give yourself no airs of prudery.”

“ Oh yes, I look so like a prude ! don’t I ? ” exclaimed Claudina, with a dancing step. — “ Entertain you, Sir Eliot,” she added, as Mrs. Stewart quitted the room, to go above and sit with Mrs. Powis : “ I have never found that very difficult yet ; you are easily pleased. If there was *not* a thick fog, and it did *not* rain, and was *not* as cold as March, we would take a walk before tea : but as it is — here Robert, (to the servant, who now entered, my present Robert,) go and fetch a faggot of wood large enough to burn ten Guy Fauxes, and then bring us lights, let down the curtains, sweep the hearth, turn out the cat, and send in Rover, — my own favourite Rover ! ” she continued, patting and caressing my spaniel.

Whilst the man obeyed the latter part of her orders, I was actively employed on the former. From behind the outside green door, where they were piled, I fetched several logs of wood, and laid

them on the fire, which extorted an exclamation from Claudina, who often at that time spoke without reflection, of—
“ Bravo, Ferdinand!”

“ Thank you, Miranda,” I replied, and looked even more than I could express.

We were once more alone, and standing together near the chimney, when she started away, saying, “ Because the good old ladies are not here, don’t let us forget that this is Sunday ;” and going over to a table at the farther end of the room, she brought back a book,—“ Now I promise to indulge you in your strange uncouth college attitude of two elbows on the table, and your face half buried in your hands, if you will indulge me by sitting down on the opposite sofa, that I may have a full view of the preacher, and reading me a sermon.”

“ Willingly,” I replied, “ but not in the attitude you condemn in the shape of permission ; it may be suited to the perusal of a play, or a pamphlet, of a poem, or a newspaper, but not to that exterior respect due to the sacred Scrip-

tures, or any writings of a religious tendency.”

I sat down on the sofa to which Claudina had pointed, whilst she took possession of that opposite.

“ And now,” she said, whilst I drew forward the sofa-table, and the lights, “ read well, and distinctly, and harmoniously, and just loud enough, and not too loud; for your preferment, perhaps, depends upon this lecture: at any rate, I shall be ready to do you justice, and wish that, instead of being a baronet of fortune, you were an humble curate, that I might present you with a living now in my gift — and Bloomfield Rectory in Wiltshire is not to be despised, I assure you. It was held upwards of thirty years by my father’s worthy friend and tutor; and I now hold it until his only son is old enough to take orders. I think my little play-fellow, Henry Clonmore, will make a smart pretty parson enough.”

“ Henry Clonmore! what of Exeter College, Oxford?”

Thus a new point of interest arose between Claudina and myself. I endeavoured to recollect your having mentioned the name of Powis to me, but if you ever had, I had forgotten it; and now I had no time for indulging in wonder, being reminded of the sermon.

Although I had selected a discourse at random, it was appropriate to the Sacrament of that day, on which subject having dwelt for a few pages, it proceeded to expatiate on the various other institutions among Christians, those of Baptism, Confirmation, the Ritual of the Dead, Ordination, and lastly Matrimony.

My voice was perfectly steady whilst reading what concerned the former, but certainly failed me at the latter. The discourse painted the happiness existing between a wedded pair, united by love, and sanctioned by religion; it touched on the evils attending the state, but made the good greatly preponderate; described the sympathy of husband and wife, pointed out their duties, laid before them the awful responsibility of becoming parents; and finally represented them

united for ever in the eternal mansions of bliss. Adding, and surely those words were ominous, “Immaterial which of the twain should be first recalled, to which it should be said, ‘Tarry yet upon the earth for a season,’—your time must come, and whether that be days or years, it is but a span compared to eternity—once united in heaven, the union is for ever.”

I finished the sermon. Determined to conclude my task without the smallest interruption, I had not even looked up; but I now shut the book with a violence I could no longer restrain, and giving a sudden loose to the swelling emotion of my breast, I quitted my place, and went to the opposite sofa, where sat Claudina, her head reclining on her hand: as she leant on the cushion nearest the fire, I took that which was next to me.

“Claudina,” I said, and pressed her hand in mine, “Claudina, this morning we, for the last time perhaps, worshipped together at the altar of our Maker. We repeated the same words, word for word; we put up the same supplications, we im-

ployed the same Divine protection ; this day we have, side by side at the holy table, partaken of the cup of salvation ; one blessing was pronounced on both, and with one sound and one heart we repeated before the minister of God, the devout ‘ Amen.’ ”

I stopped, overcome at once by my own feelings, and the consciousness of what I had yet to say. Claudina wept, — she had long been weeping, though unknown to me. She now sobbed — I clasped her hand still closer in mine, but the pressure was not returned, neither was the hand withdrawn.

“ Claudina,” I continued, “ is there not another sacred rite, in which, kneeling side by side at the holy table, before the minister of the Almighty, we might, not indeed repeat the same words, but others, by which our souls, now divided, would become one ? Speak, dearest Claudina, were you asked to give yourself to me, could you again repeat the devout ‘ Amen ? ’ ”

“ Still silent ! speak, only say one word. Should you determine against

me, I am gone to-morrow, and through my life it shall be my study to avoid you. Should, on the contrary, your answer be favourable — speak, Claudina,” I continued, in a low voice, yet with passion and vehemence, “ this silence is not natural, it is not like yourself — put your answer in any shape you please ; but speak, let me hear the sound of your voice.”

Slowly she lifted up her head, and turned towards me, a brilliant sun-beam piercing through the rain ; — the smile, the blushing look, even the tears, were those of love, of overflowing happiness.— “ Wait,” she said, “ until Henry Clonmore is in orders, and in possession of Bloomfield Rectory : if, when kneeling at *his* feet, and in *his* church, *he* put the question of ‘ Wilt thou ?’ how should I be able to refuse ?”

She said no more — no more was necessary — thousands of words after these were superfluous. She was mine, mine from that hour, wholly mine, everlastingly mine ! — Everlastingly ! and she is mine no longer ! — And after this, all

this that I have been detailing, you would talk to me of marrying again!—Can you restore the bloom to the peach, the dew-drop to the rose, the broken lily to the stalk, the faded rainbow to its tints?—she was all these to me—she was my earthly charm and hope — the flower of my life — the pride, the treasure of my existence.

Had she died and left me a tribe of children, I should still have mourned her; or had she never become a mother, I still had loved her: it was for her own sake, and for that alone, I doted upon her, and as it plainly appeared she loved me for myself, preferring me to the whole world. You, Clonmore, united us, you blessed us, and we were blessed — the following eight years of my life were uninterrupted sunshine — her piety to her Maker, her universal benevolence, her active charity, her unabated cheerfulness, and her affection to me, were unparalleled — love mellowed into firm and constant friendship. This is no anti-climax, Clonmore, as you, a fond husband, must be now aware; and so ex-

cellent a mother to her child, a mistress to her servants, an hostess to her guests ! — all, all was confirmation, that in marrying my Claudina, I but accepted the wife that Heaven itself offered me.

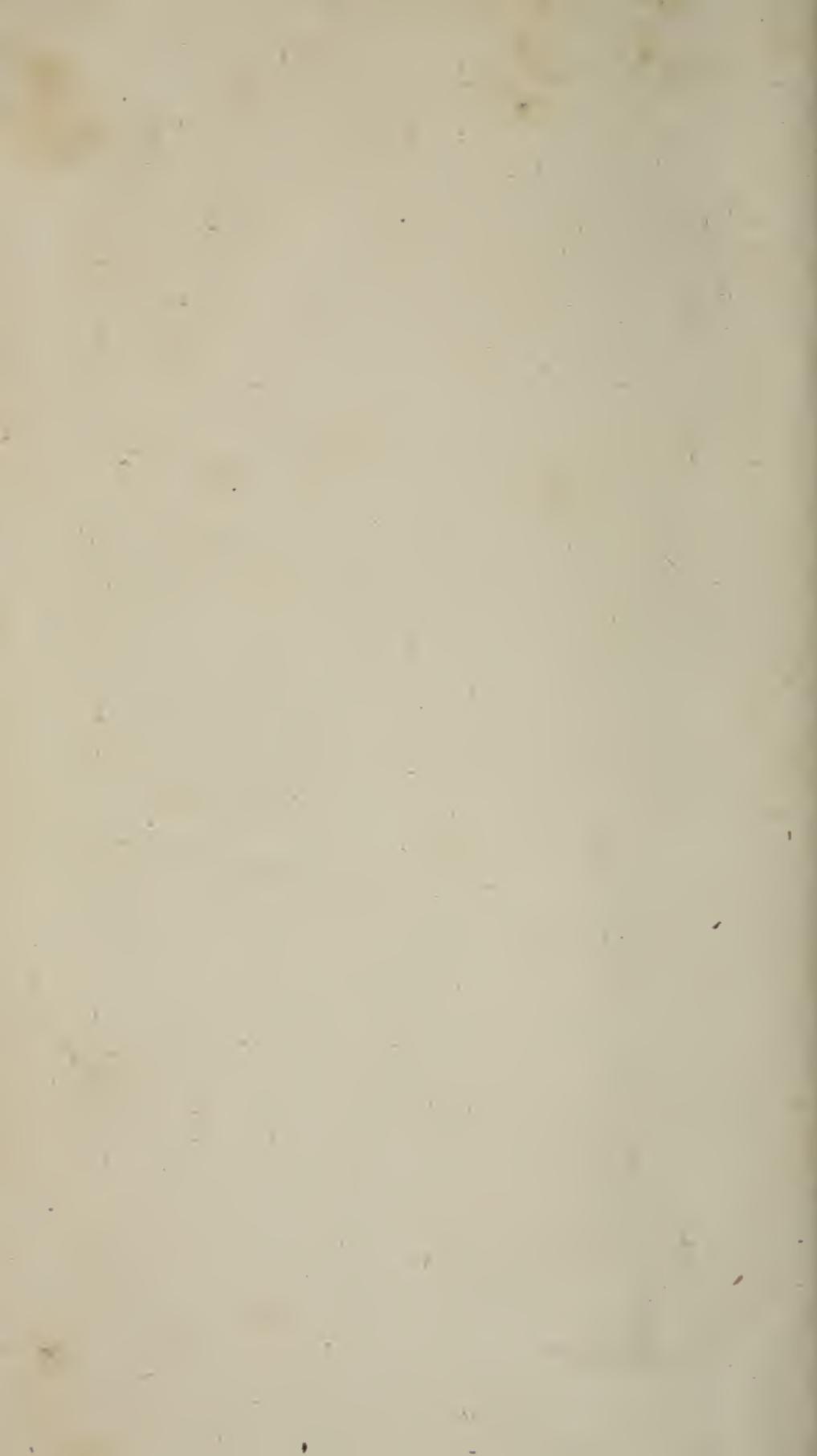
And Heaven has thought proper to take back the blessed gift — its will be done. But had that Divine Will recalled us at one and the same moment, how many bitter hours I had been spared — what fruitless anguish, what extremity of despair. Like those who, having lost a limb in battle, assert they feel the sensations of pain, and cold, and heat, in that severed limb ; I still seem to feel Claudina ever near me, to sympathise in her emotions, to hear her voice, to embrace her form, to receive her caresses.— That beauteous form is dust ; that angel voice is silent ; those emotions are dead. — She is dead — I love to repeat these words ; I repeat them frequently through the day — Claudina is dead — she is dead.

Of that you have heard — no doubt you have, and long since, for I recollect she died on the 28th of June. — Oh

God ! this very day ! — now four years since — this day, this very day ! — I feel weary, and I cannot see to write any longer — the sun dazzles me, and yet it is so dark I can no longer see to write.— What is all this ?—my head is bewildered —it aches, it throbs, it burns.

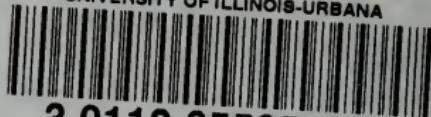
The paper I write on is spotted with blood — it is not ink ! I tell you, Clonmore, it is blood, and you will find it such.— I laughed at it at first ; yes, laughed aloud, and dipped my finger into it, and dabbled in the spots — yet still I write on — I soon shall reach them ; they are here, close, close at hand — every thing I touch, every thing I look at is blood — the sky, the earth, the sun itself is blood — but it is not the blood of Claudina ; her's, her's is dried up long since, parched — withered — withered like my heart which I now strike — and which beats with a violence that —

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





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